ABORIGINAL ART

NEW YORK | 25 MAY 2022



Sotheby's EST. 1744



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N10970 "ABORIGINAL"

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PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 1

A CLUB, GIPPSLAND, VICTORIA

Circa 1850;
Carved and engraved hardwood;
26 ⅝ in (67.6 cm);

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Queensland

Aboriginal and Pacific Art Gallery, Melbourne

American Private Collection, acquired from the above in the 1990s

$ 8,000 – 12,000

Made by the Kurnai people of Gippsland in eastern Victoria and named a *Kul-luk* or *Kujerung*, and carved from a tough hard and heavy wood, it is a club particular to this area of Australia. This exceptional example is stoned carved and has a rich shiny patina.

For related examples see R. Brough Smyth, *The Aborigines of Victoria*, Melbourne, 1878, p. 301, and A. W. Howitt, *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, New York, 1904, pp. 264-266, fig.12.2



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 2

A FIGHTING CLUB, VICTORIA

Circa 1850;
Carved and engraved hardwood;
27 ¼ in (69.2 cm);

PROVENANCE

Clive Loveless, London

American Private Collection, acquired from the above

$ 4,000 – 6,000

Robert Brough Smyth noted that "the club or waddy called by the natives of the Yarra River, kud-jee-run or Kud-jer-oong is used mostly in single combat, when both combatants are provided with the strong shield. Blows are aimed at the head only with this weapon. To strike another part would be deemed unfair." (R. Brough Smyth, *The Aborigines of Victoria*, Melbourne, 1878, p. 299).

See C. Cooper, *Aboriginal Australia*, Australian Gallery Directors Council, Sydney, 1981, pp. 90-91, cat. nos. S56-59, for a series of later examples, and R. Brough Smyth, ibid.



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 3

A PARRYING SHIELD, SOUTH EAST AUSTRALIA

19th Century;
Carved and engraved hardwood;
34 ¼ in (87 cm);

PROVENANCE

Private Collection

Sotheby's, New York, *African, Oceanic and Pre Columbian Art*, 17 November 2006, lot 231, consigned by the above

American Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

$ 12,000 – 18,000



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 4

A NARROW SHIELD, SOUTH EAST AUSTRALIA

19th Century;
Carved and engraved hardwood;
33 ⅞ in (86 cm);

With a reattached fabric label inscribed in black ink in an old hand: Fiji Island Sheild. [sic] of [?] 60 yrs ago. Mrs J. B. Browne. 625 K. St.

PROVENANCE

John S. Boskovich, Los Angeles

Sotheby's, New York, *African, Oceanic and Pre Columbian Art*, 17 November 2006, lot 230, consigned by the above

American Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

EXHIBITED

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Sept 2009 - November 2012

$ 12,000 – 18,000



LOT 5

WILLIAM BARAK

Circa 1824 - 1903

Corroboree (Women in possum skin cloaks), 1897

Earth pigments and charcoal on paper;
19 ¾ in by 26 ¾ in (50.5 by 68 cm);

Inscribed in French:
Corroboree peint par Berak, roi et
dernier survivant de la tribu des Yarras Yarras
(née en 1825, mort en 1903) 1897
[Corroboree painted by Barak, King and
last survivor of the Yarra Yarra tribe
(Born in 1825, died in 1903) 1897]

PROVENANCE

Executed at Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve, near Healesville, Victoria, circa 1897

Jules de Pury, Neuchâtel

Roland de Pury, Neuchâtel

Pascal de Pury, Neuchâtel

And thence by descent

$ 300,000 – 400,000

This painting depicts three lines of women dancing at ceremony, wearing possum skin cloaks and carrying spears. The top line with babies carried on their backs, the middle line with string bags hanging from their heads and backs, and the bottom line wearing wooden Coolomons (carry dishes) upon their heads with string bags suspended behind. Such an image is unique in the artist's oeuvre.

Cf. C. Keeler and V. Couzens, *Meerreeng-An Here Is My Country: The story of Aboriginal Victoria Told Through Art*, Melbourne, 2010, p. 164, for a closely related example made by Barak in 1897 now in the collection of the Koorie Heritage Trust.



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LOT 6

WILLIAM BARAK

Circa 1824 - 1903

Parrying Shield, 1897

Earth pigments on carved and engraved hardwood;
37 ½ in by 6 in (95 cm by 15.5 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted and carved at Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve, near Healesville, Victoria, circa 1897

Jules de Pury, Neuchâtel

Roland de Pury, Neuchâtel

Pascal de Pury, Neuchâtel

And thence by descent

$ 15,000 – 25,000

Cf. C. Keeler and V. Couzens, *Meerreeng-An Here Is My Country: The story of Aboriginal Victoria Told Through Art*, Melbourne, 2010, p. 164, for a closely related example made by Barak in 1897 now in the collection of the Koorie Heritage Trust.



WILLIAM BARAK AND THE DU PURY FAMILY

William Barak's two- and three-dimensional artworks document Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung culture and speak to the survival of First Nations' traditions in defiance of colonisation. Many of Barak's paintings, drawings, carved weapons, and tools survive today because of his strong friendships with settlers who arrived in Kulin Country in the second half of the nineteenth century. *Corroboree (Women in possum skin cloaks)* and *Parrying Shield* are no different, as they were acquired from the artist in the 1890s by Jules de Pury, a member of a local Swiss family with whom Barak established a strong friendship.

Barak was born circa 1824 into the Wurundjeri-Willam clan group of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, of the larger Kulin nation. His parents Bebejan and Tooterrie named him Beruk (or Baruk), later anglicised as his surname; William became his first name. Barak was a young man when he watched his father and uncles sign John Batman's 'treaty' to purchase land that would become the cities of Melbourne and Geelong. Though disavowed by Governor Bourke in Sydney, the treaty is simultaneously seen as an important moment recognising Kulin sovereignty and part of the process of Aboriginal dispossession. Pastoralists, purchasing large tracts of Kulin Country from the Crown, exacerbated this process. As he entered adulthood, the world Barak had known as a boy was transformed by colonisation; new animals, diseases, a gold rush and European agriculture radically altered Kulin lifeways.

Following his cousin Simon Wonga (1820s-1875), who was *Ngurungaeta* (leader), Barak learned the arts of diplomacy as a young man during what historians call the protectorate era. During the Port Phillip Protectorate, from 1839 to 1849, Aboriginal people negotiated with the new and evolving European governance. In the regions surrounding Melbourne a compassionate government employee named William Thomas (1793-1867) took on the concerns of many of the Kulin people. Thomas began advocating on their behalf to secure 'A block of land in the country where they may sit down, plant corn, potatoes ... and work like white men.'[1]

Responding to these challenges became an important part of Barak's life when, in his fifties, he took on the hereditary role of *Ngurungaeta*. With Simon Wonga's leadership and the support of Thomas, the Kulin community secured 2,300 acres at the confluence of the Yarra River and Badger Creek and named it Coranderrk. As a farming community 50 kilometres from Melbourne, they grew vegetables and hops while also manufacturing cultural objects like shields and baskets. These activities brought in enough income to make Coranderrk almost self-supporting. However, their hard-won prosperity was not to last. Local settlers undermined their successes and attempted to have the reserve closed, and the residents moved.

As *Ngurungaeta*, Barak commenced a persuasive and peaceful campaign of letters and deputations, making use of the settler press and drawing upon connections formed with colonial elites. Known as the 'Coranderrk Rebellion', this period has been detailed in a book of the same name by Diane Barwick. [2] Anne Fraser Bon (1838-1936), a Scottish widow and long-time friend, supported Barak and became an early collector of his paintings and drawings. Before her death, Bon donated one painting to the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and one to the Ballarat Art Gallery - the latter being the first Aboriginal artwork donated to a major public art gallery. [3] Governors including Brougham Loch and Albert Brassey, politicians including Alfred Deakin and Graham Berry, and anthropologists including Alfred Howitt, were among Barak's network of contacts. But it was Bon who consistently supported the community, providing a place for the men to stay when they walked to Melbourne to present petitions to the Aboriginal Protection Board.

The 'Coranderrk Rebellion' resulted in a parliamentary inquiry in 1881, the first of its kind to hear Aboriginal testimony. In 1884, Chief Secretary Graham Berry declared Coranderrk 'a site for use of the Aborigines.'[4] It was in the years following that Barak began painting. Against the backdrop of the loss of his wife and son to consumption (tuberculosis) and the removal of Coranderrk residents of mixed heritage under new legislation, this marked the beginning of an important phase in Barak's life as the leader of his people.

In addition to Bon and other local settlers, a diverse array of tourists day-tripped to Coranderrk and its surrounds to enjoy a rural idyll. They often purchased artworks as souvenirs. Barak found an important audience for his paintings, drawings, carved weapons, and tools among settler supporters and even formed relationships with non-Indigenous artists in the Victorian colony. This interaction was prolific enough that art historian Andrew Sayers described Coranderrk as a place where Aboriginal artists worked, exemplifying an important early proto-Indigenous art centre.[5] Though the names of many of the men and women who wove baskets and carved tools and weapons for the tourist market were not recorded, pieces by Coranderrk residents Jack Narrowan and Timothy can be seen in the State Ethnographic Collections of Saxony (Dresden) and Museums Victoria respectively.

Barak's paintings were first exhibited in 1943 at the National Gallery and National Museum of Victoria (now the State Library Victoria) in an exhibition titled 'Primitive Art'. This exhibition was somewhat of an anomaly. It was not until the 1980s, after decades of neglect that Barak's paintings and drawings began to be regularly exhibited in Australia, gaining recognition outside of an ethnographic or primitive art framework.[6] Barak's artworks are now present in all major Australian



Victor de Pury (1873-1960)
King Barak: Last of the Yarra tribe 1899, oil on canvas, 60.5 x 47.7 cm, Private collection

museum and gallery collections, as well as private and international collections. Some pieces travelled long distances after being bought and sold by international visitors to Victoria, then donated to the Musée d'ethnographie in Neuchâtel, Ethnological Museum of Berlin, Völkerkundemuseum Herrnhut, and the State Ethnographic Collections of Saxony. These destinations represent both the Elder's relationships with collectors in the colonial era, some of whom he befriended, and the consequences of now-denigrated collecting practices, where provenance is still to be revealed.

The *Parrying Shield* is long and pointed; the front-facing section has been incised with concentric diamond patterns and a central curved motif. A square grip sits midway along the length of the weapon. Like other parrying shields from Australia's southeast, Barak has reserved the patterned carving, sometimes called a lozenge pattern, to one section. The geometric designs resemble many shields in Australian gallery collections (for example, the National Gallery of Victoria). Shields with a clear provenance to the artist are rare, as many cultural objects were acquired during the colonial era without clear attribution and the makers' names have been lost. This shield resembles an example in the Koorie Heritage Trust collection, carved by Barak in 1897 with a similar lozenge design on one side.[7] This parrying shield has not seen the wear or gained the patina of heavy use, and despite its age, the carving looks as fresh as the day Barak presented it to Jules de Pury.

Barak's subjects reflect important cultural memory. The majority of his 52 known paintings and drawings depict ceremony and ceremonial gatherings. Barak's artworks were produced predominantly during the 1880s and 1890s and formed an important part of how he communicated culture and fulfilled his inherited role as leader. He completed two landscapes, and often included animals and cultural objects in his compositions. Infrequently he added trees and a horizon line, markers of his reference to the European landscape genre. Echidna, kangaroos, emus, lyrebirds and reptiles often feature among the male dancers. Seated women and children are represented wrapped



William Barak, *Corroboree*, 1895, 60 x 75 cm, in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, sold by Sotheby's 20/07/2009, AUD$504,000.00

in possum skin cloaks, singing and keeping time on skin drums. Occasionally we see a baby's head peeping over its mother's shoulder as she sits in the ceremony or, as in *Corroboree (Women in possum skin cloaks)*, walks with her hunting tools. Such details reveal significant Kulin practices preserved in Barak's unique visual schema.

Corroboree (Women in possum skin cloaks) depicts a group of women clad in possum skin cloaks, carrying their babies, digging sticks and woven baskets on their backs. In three rows across the whole page, the cloaked women appear, walking purposefully. Barak has individuated each woman's cloak, as he frequently did in other paintings, using curved sections to represent the possum pelts making up each garment. An individual's possum cloak grew incrementally with new pelts added as needed, the garment becoming as unique as its wearer. Thick charcoal lines demarcate these cloaks, which have been in-filled with light red or dark red ochre. An inscription has been added to the top reading:

Corroboree peint par Berak, roi et
Dernier survivant de la tribu des Yarras Yarras
(nee in 1825, mort en 1903) 1897
Corroboree painted by Barak, King and
Last survivor of the Yarra Yarra tribe
(Born in 1825, death in 1903) 1897

Such descriptions often feature on the front or reverse of Barak's paintings and drawings. Many visitors to Coranderrk who purchased artworks from Barak sought to commemorate the occasion by inscribing the date of their visit with a note of the subject of the artwork such as 'Corroboree'. Designating Barak as the last leader of his tribe was a common but misguided practice. The role of *Ngurungaeta* was passed by Barak to his descendants who continue Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung cultural practices and the strong connection to Coranderrk established by forbears like him.

As a crowd scene in reds and black, *Corroboree (Women in possum skin cloaks)* stands out for its minimal colour scheme and uncommon composition. Though stylistically similar to Barak's other paintings and drawings from the 1890s, which feature similar thick outlines and detailed cloak designs, his most frequent compositions feature ceremonies with two fires and male dancers assembled. Compositions with dancers across the top of the page, supported by one or two masters of ceremony, animals and women drumming across the bottom, have become Barak's most recognisable style and subject matter. As a different type of gathering, *Corroboree (Women in Possum skin cloaks)* is similar to *Figures in possum skin cloaks and lyrebird* in the South Australian Museum collection. Here Barak depicts a similar grouping of red-cloaked individuals, this time a group of men, their beards and hair adornments distinguishing their age or rank. In rows across the page, men are gathered around a central lyrebird whose presence perhaps indicates the purpose of the gathering. The similarities between that painting and *Corroboree (Women in possum skin cloaks)* indicate important themes within Barak's oeuvre, which are still being uncovered through research with his descendants.

Using recycled materials and experimenting with a mixture of traditional and introduced painting media, Barak's practice embodies his other strategies as a leader bridging a cultural divide. His approach to art-making was highly syncretic, but his subject matter remained almost completely focused on his own culture. The paper on which he painted and drew was often appropriated or recycled. The National Gallery of Australia holds a painting in a similar colour scheme of red and black executed on the reverse page of a Pictorial Gospel Readings for Holy Week service. Barak would sketch the composition in black pencil, before applying natural earth pigments, watercolours, and charcoal. Visitors, like the wealthy German traveller and ethnologist Arthur Baessler, observed the artist drawing his figures in full, before drawing their garments over the top. [8]

Highly significant among Barak's network were a community of Swiss settlers, including the de Pury family from Neuchâtel through whom the *Parrying Shield* and *Corroboree (Women in possum skin cloaks)* are provenanced. During the 1860s, as Coranderrk was being established, Baron Frédéric Guillaume de Pury (1831-1890) and his brother Samuel (1836-1922) were buying land in the Yarra Valley and beginning what would become a successful winegrowing and grazing estate known as Yeringberg. As this was Barak's hereditary land, his friendship with the Baron's sons George and Victor is highly significant and reveals key ways that he stayed connected to Kulin Country. The trio went hunting together on many occasions. Such events were often recorded by their mother in letters or in the daily Farm Diary (held by the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum). Barak taught the two boys Kulin hunting skills while Coranderrk residents found employment at Yeringberg during the grape harvest.

The most striking embodiment of the connection between the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Elder and the de Pury family is Victor's oil portrait of Barak. Completed in 1899 under the tutelage of Portuguese artist Artur Jose Loureiro (1853-1932), it depicts Barak in a patient and wise pose, and captures the friendship between him and the de Pury family. Loureiro and the young de Pury worked side by side and completed their portraits over two weeks in July 1899.[9] Loureiro's own portrait shows the Elder from a slightly different angle, as a soft light falls on his white hair, revealing how the easels were placed for the painting session.

Victor and Loureiro were among a small group of artists who painted Barak's portrait during the Elder's lifetime. Scottish-born John Mather (1848-1916) and South African-born Florence Fuller (1867-1946) were two others. Mather's relationship with Barak extended to acquiring two paintings on cardboard whose provenance was recently confirmed by State Library Victoria.[10] Fuller's portrait of Barak, also in State Library Victoria, was commissioned by Anne Fraser Bon and represents some of the significant recognition Barak received during his lifetime. Victor de Pury joined these artists as a member of the Victorian Artists' Society, exhibiting alongside them as an amateur.

The Victorian Artists' Society included among its founders artists now regarded as the most significant proponents of Australian Impressionism. While Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton and Charles Conder, among others, have headlined this movement, John Mather, Artur Jose Loureiro and Florence Fuller are among a cohort receiving growing recognition. Although Barak was excluded from exhibiting alongside the Australian Impressionists, he produced his work in the same pioneering *plein air* setting, while Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country was being immortalised in many Heidelberg School landscapes.

The most significant relationship for *Parrying Shield* and *Corroboree (Women in possum skin cloaks)* was Barak's friendship with Baron de Pury's nephew Jules de Pury (1861-1927). Jules visited Yeringberg as a young man in the 1880s and 1890s. Their friendship can be observed in archives, particularly the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum collection, donated by members of the de Pury family at Yeringberg in 2013. Whilst Jules de Pury was in Australia in 1886, one of their numerous meetings was recorded. "Barak was here the other

day," the letter book reads, "but he did not stay long, he wanted an old dress for his niece, and of course helped himself plentifully to Jules's tobacco."[11] Barak's visits to Yeringberg were also recorded in photographs, such as one showing the artist standing with Jules de Pury and Ada and Guillaume de Pury, and their guests.[12] Barak stands in the centre while Guillaume and Ada are seated in the front; they form a relaxed group posing in the Yeringberg gardens.

It was for the de Pury family too, that Barak painted one of only two landscapes in his known oeuvre. In the late 1890s Samuel de Pury was presented with an artwork depicting his vineyard, which was sent to him by Barak after he had returned permanently to Switzerland in 1868.[13] On the bottom Barak described the subject matter:

I send you two pictures
Native Name Gooring Nuring
The English name is Bald Hill
this is all your Vineyard
and trees this all belong to
you there your house above
with the vineyard where
you yous [used] to stop before this is
the picture of it what you see now
I send you this paper
I still remember you all the
time not forgetting yous at all
and your Uncle. I am getting very
old now I can't walk about
now much
William Barak.

The painting records Barak's close relationship with the de Pury family. Samuel. Herman de Pury, Samuel's son, later donated the painting to the Musée d'ethnographie, Neuchâtel, alongside another painting by Barak. Each artwork represents a unique and important thread connecting Barak with the large de Pury family.

Jules de Pury returned to Switzerland in 1897 or 1898, likely taking the artworks with him. They have remained in the family ever since, passing down the generations to his son Roland de Pury (1907-1979), and then to Roland's eldest son Pascal de Pury (1932-2017).

The existence of each of Barak's artworks is due in part to the strong relationships he formed with those who acquired paintings, drawings, weapons, and tools from him at Coranderrk. He stands today as a monumental figure, described by Carol Cooper, senior curator at National Museum of Australia, as "a diplomat and communicator who tried to adjust to the world of the Europeans but was also a spokesperson for the rights of his own people."[14] Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin, Senior Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Elder, describes her great-great uncle's paintings as "our ancient treasures", noting that these images should not be ignored. "They are embedded with respect and integrity and represent the stories of the oldest living culture in the world." [15]

Dr Nikita Vanderbyl is art historian and part time lecturer in History at La Trobe University.

ENDNOTES

[1]Simon Wonga cited in Giordano Nanni, and Andrea James. Coranderrk: We Will Show the Country. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2013, 6

[2]Diane Barwick, Rebellion at Coranderrk. Edited by Laura E. Barwick and Richard E. Barwick. Canberra: Aboriginal History Inc., 1998.

[3]Ian McLean, Rattling Spears: A History of Indigenous Australian Art. London: Reakton, 2016, 56.

[4]Nanni and James, 204.

[5]Andrew Sayers, Australian Art, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, 71.

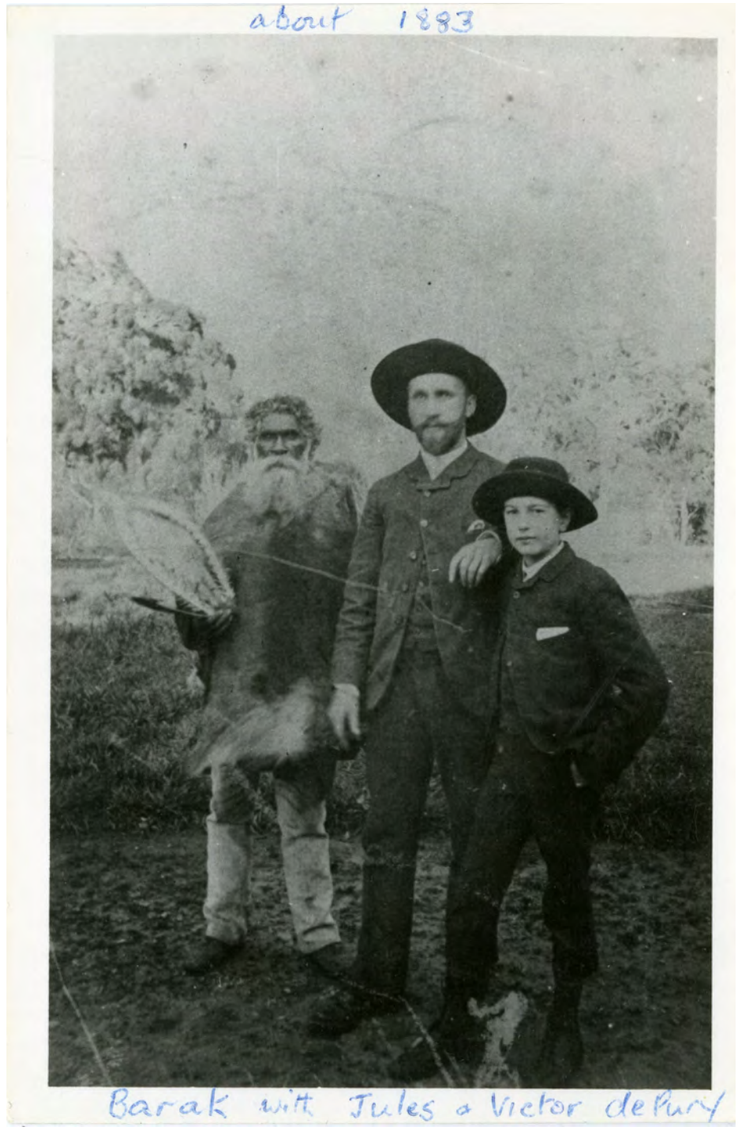
[6]Carol Cooper, Aboriginal Australia. Sydney: Australian Gallery Directors Council, 1981.

[7]Keeler, Chris, and Vicki Louise Couzens. Meerreeng-an Here Is My Country: The Story of Aboriginal Victoria Told through Art. Melbourne: Koorie Heritage Trust Incorporated, 2010, 164.

[8]Arthur Baessler cited in Ian Clark, A Peep at the Blacks': A History of Tourism at Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, 1863-1924. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015, 185.

[9]Yarra Ranges Regional Museum: 9767.14, Yeringberg Times; 9656, 19 July 1898; 9657, 10 and 11 July 1899; 17 July 1899; 9658, 13 July 1900.

[10]Nikita Vanderbyl, "William Barak's Paintings at State Library Victoria." The La Trobe Journal 103 (2019).



William Barak with Jules and Victor de Pury c. 1883
Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, P4724

[11]Letter book 1, 9 November 1886, p. 69, Private Collection, cited in Karlie Hawking, Oil Paint and Ochre exhibition catalogue 2015, 12.

[12]Photograph, William Barak standing with Jules de Pury, Rico Sace, and an unknown visitor, with Frederic Guillaume and Ada de Pury seated at Yeringberg, c. 1886-90, YRRM 5555, cited in Hawking, 2015, 15.

[13]Nikita Vanderbyl, "Artist and Statesman: William Barak and the Trans-Imperial Circulation of Aboriginal Cultural Objects." PhD Doctoral Thesis, La Trobe University, 2019, 155.

[14]Carol Cooper, cited in Kelly Gellatly, 'When the Wattles Bloom Again: The Barak Project', Art Journal, 51, < https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/when-the-wattles-bloom-again-the-barak-project/>

[15]Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin cited in Ryan, Judith, Carol Cooper, and Joy Murphy-Wandin. Remembering Barak. Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2003, 6.



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 7

A RARE BOOMERANG, GREAT SANDY DESERT, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Carved hardwood;
25 ⅝ in (65.1 cm);

PROVENANCE

Reportedly collected in the Great Sandy Desert in the 1920s

Aboriginal and Pacific Art Gallery, Melbourne

American Private Collection, acquired from the above

$ 4,000 – 6,000

This boomerang is of an extremely rare and unusual form with its protrusion extending below the central arch. It was reputedly collected in the Great Sandy Desert of Western Australia in the 1920s. There is a somewhat related example with a similarly carved protrusion extending at the top of the arch in the collection of the South Australian Museum; that example was collected in Central Australia in 1909.

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 8

A FINE AND RARE SPEAR THROWER, PORT ESSINGTON, NORTHERN TERRITORY

Carved hardwood, bush string, animal sinew, earth pigments and resin;
47 ¼ in (120 cm);

PROVENANCE

Gumbuya Park Museum, Victoria

Australian Private Collection

American Private Collection, acquired from the above in 2004

$ 10,000 – 15,000

Cf. H. Basedow, "Anthropological Notes on the Coastal Tribes of the Northern Territory", *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia*, 1907, vol. 31, pp. 1-62, pls. 1-19; and S. Davies, *Collected: 150 Years of Aboriginal Art and Artifacts at the Macleay Museum*, Sydney, 2002, p. 22, pl. 10, for examples of a similar quality collected before 1878.

"Aboriginal people in the Port Essington area used this type of spearthrower which was made from an extremely light wood and is said to have been used only by experienced men [...] [the] extremely fine incised decoration present on the handle [...] extends on to the shaft. Basedow (1907) reported that this type of decoration (consisting of rows of small holes) was applied with a fishbone, or small stick" *(ibid*.).

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 9

A LARGE WUNDA SHIELD, PILBARA REGION, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

19th Century;
Carved and engraved softwood, red and white natural earth pigments;
37 ¼ in by 5 ¾ in (95.9 cm by 14.6 cm);

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Western Australia

American Private Collection, acquired in the 1990s

$ 8,000 – 12,000

Cf. D. S. Davidson, "A Preliminary Consideration of Aboriginal Australian Decorative Art", *Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society*, Philadelphia, 1937, p. 36, fig. 22, for a very similar shield (height: 44 1/4 in; 112.5 cm) with closely related designs to both the front and back, identified as having come from De Grey in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 10

A COOLAMON

Circa 1900;
Carved and fluted hardwood;
21 ¾ in by 9 ⅜ in (55.4 by 23.8 cm);

PROVENANCE

Aboriginal and Pacific Art Gallery, Melbourne

American Private Collection, acquired from above in the 1990s

$ 3,000 – 5,000



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 11

A SHIELD, SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

Circa 1900;
Carved hardwood with natural earth pigments;
21½ in by 6 ½ in (55 by 16.5 cm);

PROVENANCE

Mossgreen Auctions, Sydney, *Fine Early Aboriginal & Oceanic Art*, 31 August 2009, lot 4

American Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

EXHIBITED

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 2012 - December 2020

$ 15,000 – 20,000



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 12

A SHIELD, SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

Circa 1900;
Carved hardwood with natural earth pigments;
23 in by 7 ¼ in (58.4 cm by 18.4 cm);

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Queensland

Private Collection, Melbourne

Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Melbourne

American Private Collection, acquired from the above

$ 10,000 – 15,000



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 13

A SHIELD, SOUTHWEST QUEENSLAND

Circa 19th Century;
Carved and engraved wood with natural earth pigments;
17 ¾ in by 6 in (45 cm by 12.7 cm);

PROVENANCE

Reputedly collected at Cherbourg, Queensland, in 1928

Private Collection

Sotheby's, Melbourne, *Aboriginal Art*, 25 July 2005, lot 20, consigned by the above

Australian Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

Sotheby's, Sydney, *Aboriginal Art*, 20 October 2008, lot 43, consigned by the above

American Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

$ 8,000 – 12,000



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 14

A SWORD CLUB, NORTH EAST QUEENSLAND

Circa Late 19th Century;
Carved hardwood and resin;
48 ⅝ in (123.5 cm);

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Queensland

Aboriginal and Pacific Art Gallery, Melbourne

American Private Collection, acquired from the above in 2001

$ 4,000 – 6,000



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 15

A RAINFOREST SHIELD, NORTH EAST QUEENSLAND

Carved fig-wood, natural earth pigments, native binding fluids;
41 ½ in by 12 ¾ in (105.4 cm by 32.4 cm);

PROVENANCE

American Private Collection

$ 30,000 – 50,000

A kidney-shaped shield of the type that is unique to the peoples of the rainforest region around Cairns, on the north east coast of Cape York Peninsula in Queensland. Fashioned from the buttress root of the native fig tree, these shields were painted by two men simultaneously executing a symmetrical design from opposite ends of the shield. The designs are usually abstractions of images of totemic natural species and phenomena, including medicinal plants and leaves, scorpions, fish and turtles. The shields feature a centrally located boss for strength. The ochre pigments painted on this shield have retained much of their original intensity: the detail of the markings within the yellow forms is an unusual feature for such shields.

Cf. Howard Morphy and Elizabeth Edwards, eds, *Australia in Oxford,* Oxford, 1988, p. 66, fig. 84, for a similar kidney-shaped shield with an undulating surface to both front and back.



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 16

A BI-CORNUAL BASKET OR JAWUN, NORTH EAST QUEENSLAND

11 in by 8 ½ in (27.9 cm by 21.6 cm);

PROVENANCE

Muralambeen Homestead, Far North Queensland
Private Collection, Queensland
Aboriginal and Pacific Art Gallery, Melbourne
American Private Collection, acquired from the above

EXHIBITED

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, September 2009 - September 2012

$ 10,000 – 12,000

For an extensive discussion of the history, construction methods and use of Queensland rainforest baskets see J. Ewington, "Working The River: Baskets Of The Rainforest", and D. Henry with T. Johnson, "Jawun: An interview with Desley Henry" in Queensland Art Gallery's catalogue of the exhibition, *Story Place: Indigenous Art of Cape York and the Rainforest*, Brisbane, 2003, pp. 158-169. This catalogue features several illustrations of historical and contemporary bi-cornual baskets; for examples of 19th century baskets see W. Caruana, *Aboriginal Art*, London and New York, 2003, p.184, pl. 161, for a basket in the collection of the Museum of Victoria; S. M. Davies, *Collected: 150 Years of Aboriginal Art and Artifacts at the Macleay Museum*, Sydney, 2002, p.77, pl. 88; H. Morphy, *Aboriginal Art*, London, 1998, p. 347, pl. 231, for a basket in the Pitt Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford.

This basket was collected on Muralambeen, a farming and grazing property in the Hinchinbrook Shire of North Queensland. Muralambeen was established by Christopher Allingham in 1876 in the floodplain of the Herbert River. The property has been in the family ever since. The property employed many Indigenous workers over the years; the women wove carrying baskets but they also traded with neighbouring groups to obtain *jawun* or bi-cornual baskets. This basket originated in the Herbert River Region and was probably made by members of the Nyawaygi or Wargamaygan groups.

Morphy says "The two-cornered baskets made from lawyer cane are striking and elegant objects. The mouth of the basket is circular; the body opens out with curved lines ending in sharply pointed corners. The form seems to be the architectural product of a mathematical formula combining strength with flexibility, a highly complex form based on simple principles [...] these rare objects epitomize the rich basketry traditions that exist throughout Australia wherever the raw materials are available." (*ibid*.).

The baskets are made by the people in the rainforest area from around Cooktown in the north to the Cardwell area in the south on the eastern coast of Cape York. Historically, they were made by men and used by women, although in more recent times women have made them too. Jawun have a variety of purposes: they are used as carrying baskets with the handle looped around the forehead; as fish traps in rivers where the horns of the baskets allow them to be wedged between sticks or rocks; and as sieves to leach out toxic substances



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 17

form a variety of bush food.

BEESWAX FIGURE, NORTH EAST ARNHEM LAND

Circa 1940s;
9 ¼ in (23.5 cm);



PROVENANCE

Alistair McAlpine, Baron McAlpine of West Green

Private Collection, New York, acquired from the above

Sotheby's, Melbourne, *Aboriginal Art*, 31 October 2006, lot 1, consigned by the above

American Private Collection, acquired from the above

$ 4,000 – 6,000

Figures sculpted in beeswax and painted with clan designs such as this are associated with love magic and sorcery. The anthropologist Charles Mountford collected two human figures of Wuyal (Oijal) the boomerang-man, and his wife Neri-neri moulded in wax and painted with similar clan patterns, as well as eight painted wax sculptures of animals, at Yirrkala in 1948. These are illustrated in C. P. Mountford, *Records of the American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land, Volume 1: Art, Myth and Symbolism*, Melbourne, 1956, pp. 322 and 451, pls. 104 and 143 respectively, and in R. M. Berndt, C. H. Berndt and J. E. Stanton, *Aboriginal Australian Art: A Visual Perspective*, Melbourne, 1992, p. 111, pl. 112.

PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF FIONA BROCKHOFF

LOT 18

ATTRIBUTED TO JIMMY KERINAIUA

Working in the 1960s

Tapara (The Moon Man), Circa 1960

Natural earth pigments on carved ironwood;
Height 19 in (48 cm);



PROVENANCE

Executed in Mandiimpu country, Southern Melville Island, circa 1960

Dorothy Bennett, Darwin, acquired circa 1960

Wesfarmers Limited, Perth, acquired from the above in 1989

Sotheby's, Sydney, *Aboriginal and Tribal Art*, 9 November 1997, lot 44, consigned by the above

Fiona Brockhoff, Melbourne, acquired at the above auction

EXHIBITED

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, *Open Air: Portraits in the Landscape,* 3 December 2008 - 1 March 2009

$ 12,000 – 18,000

This sculpture was originally catalogued in the Dorothy Bennett Collection as being by Benedict Palmeiua Munkara. However, it bears no stylistic resemblance to any known sculptures by Munkara, and is by the same hand as two sculptures in the Lance Bennett Collection, recorded as being created by Jimmy Kerinaiua.

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 19

ARTIST UNKNOWN, MILINGIMBI REGION, CENTRAL ARNHEM LAND

Mokoy Figure, Circa 1960

Natural earth pigments on carved wood;
48 ¾ in (123.8 cm);

PROVENANCE

William Jamieson, Toronto

Sotheby's, *African and Oceanic Art*, New York, November 2002, Lot 195, consigned by the above

American Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

$ 18,000 – 25,000



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 20

ATTRIBUTED TO NGULMARRMARR

Circa 1911 - 1977

Mokoy Figure, Circa 1960

Natural earth pigments on carved softwood;
47 ¼ in (120 cm);

PROVENANCE

Executed in the Milingimbi Region, Central Arnhem Land, circa 1960

Geoffrey W. Spence, Botanical Gardens Museum and Gallery, Darwin

George W. Gill, Lawrence, Kansas

The Spence-Gill Collection, Laramie, Wyoming

Sotheby's, New York, *Important Aboriginal Art*, Melbourne, 28 June 1999, lot 126

American Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

$ 10,000 – 15,000



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 21

LIBUNDJA

1912 - 1968

Djalumbu Spirit, 1965

Carved wood and natural earth pigments;
35 ¾ in (91 cm);



PROVENANCE

Executed at Millingimbi, Central Arnhem Land

Leo Fleischmann, Sydney

Private Collection, Sydney, acquired from the above in 1984

Moss Green Auctions, *Australian Indigenous and Oceanic Art*, 22 & 23 July 2014, Melbourne, lot 34

American Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

$ 18000 – 25,000

Cf. M. O'Ferrall, *Keepers of the Secrets: Aboriginal Art from Arnhem Land*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 1991, pp. 70-71.

According to O'Ferrall, "Djalumbu is the final hollow log ceremony of the Gupapuyngu Yirritja moiety people. On the chest and thighs of the sculpture are the yams that provided fruit for the spirit as it travelled to the island of the dead accompanied by the Djalumbu spirit." (*ibid.*)

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 22

ARTIST UNKNOWN, MILINGIMBI REGION, CENTRAL ARNHEM LAND

A Stingray Totem, Circa 1960

Natural earth pigments on carved hardwood;
43 ¾ in (111.5 cm);



PROVENANCE

Executed in North East Arnhem Land.

Private Collection, Melbourne

Sotheby's, Melbourne, *Aboriginal Art*, June 26-27, 2000, lot 24, consigned by the above American Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

$ 8,000 – 12,000

Cf. B. Luthi, *Aratjara: Art of the First Australians*, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, 1993, p.164, pl. 33 for a similar and smaller example, possibly by the same hand.

LOT 23

WANDJUK MARIKA

1927 - 1987

Lamamirri Clan Designs, Stingrays and Rainmaking Snakes, Circa 1960

Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark;
28 in by 19 ¼ in (71 cm by 49 cm);

PROVENANCE

Ron Croxford, acquired in Yirrkala, circa 1960

Sotheby's, Melbourne, *Important Aboriginal Art*, 30 June 1997, lot 42

Private Collection, Melbourne, acquired at the above auction

Mossgreen Auctions, Melbourne, *Important Single Owner Auction: European Furniture and Decorative Arts*, 14 September 2014, lot 40

Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

$ 10,000 – 15,000

Wandjuk Marika was born on Dhambaliya (Bremer Island), the eldest son of Mawalan Marika and while his "early life was influenced by the increasing intrusion of balanda (whitefella) influence and activity in Arnhem Land [...] Marika grew up learning the skills associated with his future responsibilities as a leader of the Rirratjingu clan and Dhuwa moiety."[1] Marika started painting on bark when he was in his mid-teens, working with his father and it was his father who taught him about "his ceremonial obligations regarding the two major Dhuwa ancestral song cycles - the Djan 'kawu Story and the Wawilak Sisters."[2]

Marika was one of the first students to attend the Yirrkala Mission school where he later became one of the assistants. It was Marika's command of the English language, that then "enabled him to interpret Yolngu culture for visiting anthropologists and art collectors."[3]

Throughout his life, Marika remained politically active on behalf of his eastern Arnhem Land clan leaders, protesting unsuccessfully against the Federal Government about mining activities that were threatening Yolngu sovereignty over their lands. He also became a key advocate for the legislative protection of Indigenous intellectual property rights.

Acquired circa 1960 in Yirrkala by the Mission School's principal Mr Ron Croxford, who recalled he purchased it at the time for "its quality and the fact that it was the first time that such a design had been presented." According to the Art Coordinator at Buku-Lurrngay Arts (Yirrkala), the designs represent Rainmaking Snakes and Totemic Species dealing with "pay-back" (personal correspondence, 1997).

1. Ken Watson, *Tradition Today: Indigenous Art In Australia*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004, p. 80

2. *ibid*.

3. *ibid*.



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PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF FIONA BROCKHOFF

LOT 24

BIRRIKIDJI GUMANA

Circa 1898 - 1982

Stingrays, 1967

Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark;
Bears artist's name and date on reverse;
26 ¾ in by 16 ¼ in (68 cm by 41.4 cm);

PROVENANCE

Sotheby's, Sydney, *Aboriginal and Tribal Art*, 9 November, 1997, lot 337

Fiona Brockhoff, Melbourne, acquired at the above auction

$ 3,000 – 5,000



PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF FIONA BROCKHOFF

LOT 25

UNKNOWN ABORIGINAL ARTIST

Stingray, 1963

Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark;
12 ½ in by 17 in (32 cm by 43 cm);

PROVENANCE

Dorothy Bennett, collected in Western Arnhem Land in 1964 or earlier

Tom and Adi Barnett, Stowe, Vermont, acquired from the above by 1964

The Barnett Collection at Columbia University, New York

Sotheby's, Melbourne, *Important Aboriginal Art*, 30 June 1997, lot 82, consigned by the above

Fiona Brockhoff, Melbourne, acquired at the above auction

$ 8,000 – 12,000



PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF FIONA BROCKHOFF

LOT 26

UNKNOWN ABORIGINAL ARTIST

Fish, Circa 1963

Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark;
13 in by 18 in (33 cm by 46 cm);

PROVENANCE

Dorothy Bennett, collected in Western Arnhem Land in 1964 or earlier

Tom and Adi Barnett, Stowe, Vermont, acquired from the above by 1964

The Barnett Collection at Columbia University, New York

Sotheby's, Melbourne, Important Aboriginal Art, 30 June 1997, lot 92, consigned by the above

Fiona Brockhoff, Melbourne, acquired at the above auction

$ 5,000 – 7,000

PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF FIONA BROCKHOFF

LOT 27

SAMUEL WAGBARA

Circa 1928 - 1979

Namarnday Spirits, 1960

Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark;
Incorrectly inscribed with the name of Paddy Compass on the reverse;
33 ¾ in by 17 ¼ in (86 cm by 44 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Minjilang, Croker Island, Western Arnhem Land.

Dorothy Bennett, Darwin

Wesfarmers Limited, Perth, acquired from the above in 1989

Sotheby's, Sydney, *Aboriginal and Tribal Art*, 9 November, 1997, lot 7, consigned by the above

Fiona Brockhoff, Melbourne, acquired at the above auction

$ 8,000 – 12,000

See Michaela Appel, ed., *Inspired by Country: Bark Paintings from Northern Australia*, Munich, 2022, p.264, cat. no. 105, for a closely related example in the collection of the Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich, and see two others in the collections of the Australian Museum and the Art Gallery of New South Wales published in Hetti Perkins, *Crossing Country: The Alchemy of Western Arnhem Land Art*, Sydney, 2004, p. 28 and p. 230.



PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF FIONA BROCKHOFF

LOT 28

SAMUEL WAGBARA

Circa 1928 - 1979

Namarnday Spirits Dancing, 1960

Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark;
29 in by 17 ¼ in (74 cm by 44 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Minjilang, Croker Island, Western Arnhem Land.

Dorothy Bennett, Darwin

Wesfarmers Limited, Perth, acquired from the above in 1989

Sotheby's, Sydney, Aboriginal and Tribal Art, 9 November, 1997, lot 3, consigned by the above

Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

$ 10,000 – 15,000

See Michaela Appel, ed., *Inspired by Country: Bark Paintings from Northern Australia*, Munich, 2022, p.264, cat. no. 105, for a closely related example in the collection of the Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich, and see two others in the collections of the Australian Museum and the Art Gallery of New South Wales published in Hetti Perkins, *Crossing Country: The Alchemy of Western Arnhem Land Art*,



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LOT 29

Sydney, 2004, p. 28 and p. 230.

JIMMY MIJAU MIJAU

Circa 1897 - 1985

Nawarran, (The Rock Python), Circa 1959

Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark;
Bears inscription 'Sugarbag' in chalk together with Spence Museum catalogue number 22 on the reverse;
30 ¾ in by 16 ¼ in (78 cm by 41.5 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted in Western Arnhem Land, circa 1960

Geoffrey W. Spence, Botanical Gardens Museum and Gallery, Darwin

George W. Gill, Lawrence, Kansas

The Spence-Gill Collection, Laramie, Wyoming

Sotheby's, Melbourne, *Important Aboriginal Art*, 28 June 1999, lot 109

Fiona Brockhoff, Melbourne, acquired at the above auction

Sotheby's, London, *Aboriginal Art*, 21 September 2016, lot 20, consigned by the above

Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

$ 8,000 – 12,000

For a closely related painting of the same subject matter in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia see, Franchesca Cubillo and Wally Caruana, eds, *Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art: Collection Highlights*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2010, p. 116.

With regard to the National Gallery of Australia's closely related example, Dr Luke Taylor writes: "Mijau Mijau's country comprising the Coburg Peninsula near Nimbuwa Rock abounds with rock art. He is first known as an artist who assisted the anthropologist Ronald Berndt's research about art and ceremony at Oenpelli (Gunbalanya) in 1949 to 1950. Later Mijau Mijau's paintings became famous through Karel Kupka, who worked on Croker Island in 1963. *Nawarran, rock python* c 1963 formed part of Kupka's personal collection [...]

The artist was a senior ceremonial leader and could paint the subjects of important ceremonies such as Wubarr, Mardayin and Kunabibi, as well as subjects that refer to the more esoteric realms of sorcery and love magic. In the early works collected by Kupka, Mijau Mijau's paintings have a rough texture akin to rock painting techniques. In this painting, Nawarran the rock python is infilled with daubs of ochre and charcoal ' which is quite unlike the very neat crosshatching of some of Mijau Mijau's later work. The painting possesses a strong graphic quality that relies less on neatness and more on contrasts in colour between infilled sections. The spiral form of the snake is a classic western Arnhem Land image, suggesting the moment of creation as the Rainbow Serpent creates a waterhole that becomes a sacred place. Similar images often show the snake coiled



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LOT 30

around its prey. Kunwinjku often say that this snake lies coiled inside the water at sacred places they call 'djang'." (*ibid.*)

JIMMY MIJAU MIJAU

Cira 1897-1985

Untitled (Rock Python and Flying Foxes), 1960

Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark;
Bears a Dorothy Bennett label on the reverse;
27 ¾ in by 21 ¼ in (71 cm by 54 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted in Western Arnhem Land, circa 1960
Dorothy Bennett, Darwin
American Private collection
Bonhams, Sydney, *Aboriginal Art*, 19 November 2012, lot 17
Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

$ 10,000 – 15,000

See Wally Caruana, *Aboriginal Art*, London, 1989, pp. 30-33, pl. 5 for a closely related painting of the same subject matter, collected by Karel



LOT 31

Kupka, and now in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia.

ATTRIBUTED TO MURAMBA

Circa 1908 - 1960

The Rockman Nimbawah

Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark;
16 ½ in by 18 in (41.9 cm by 45.7 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Oenpelli (Gunbalanya), Western Arnhem Land
William McElwee Miller, Jr, Princeton
Sotheby's, Melbourne, *Aboriginal Art*, 24 November 2009, lot 20
Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

LITERATURE

R. L. Shalkop, *The Art of Arnhem Land: From the Collection of William McE.. Miller, Jr*, Colorado Springs, 1966, cat. no. 29

EXHIBITED

The Taylor Museum of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, *The Art of Arnhem Land: From the Collection of William McE. Miller, Jr,* 1966

$ 4,000 – 6,000

Cf. Mimih couple, 1956, in H. Morphy and M. Smith Boles, eds., *Art from the Land: Dialogues with the Kluge-Ruhe Collection of Australian Aboriginal Art*, Charlottesville, 1999, p. 36, pl.2.5; and Spirit Ancestor, 1960s, in L. A. Allen, *Time Before Morning: Art and Myth of the*

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 32

Australian Aborigines, New York, 1975, p. 78.

DJAMBALULA

Circa 1908 - 1960

Mimih Ceremony, Circa 1960

Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark;
Bears number 118 on the reverse;
26 ¼ in by 19 ½ in (67 by 50 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Minjilang, Croker Island, Western Arnhem Land

Jerome Gould, Los Angeles

American Private Collection, bequeathed by the above

Sotheby's, Sydney, *Aboriginal Art including selected Oceanic Art*, 20 October 2008, lot 72, consigned by the above

American Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

EXHIBITED

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 2012 - December 2020

$ 30,000 – 40,000

Cf. Mimih couple, 1956, in H. Morphy and M. Smith Boles, eds., *Art from the Land: Dialogues with the Kluge-Ruhe Collection of Australian Aboriginal Art*, Charlottesville, 1999, p. 36, pl.2.5; and Spirit Ancestor, 1960s, in L. A. Allen, *Time Before Morning: Art and Myth of the*

Australian Aborigines, New York, 1975, p. 78.



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LOT 33

LOFTY BARDAYAL NADJAMERREK

Circa 1926 - 2009

Kangaroo, 1971

Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark;
63 in by 38 in (160 cm by 96.5 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted in West Arnhem Land

Church Missionary Society, Oenpelli (Gunbalanya), West Arnhem Land (label on the reverse)

Private Collection, Switzerland

$ 3,000 – 5,000



LOT 34

LOFTY BARDAYAL NADJAMERREK

Circa 1926 - 2009

Male Mimih propositioning a Female Mimih, Circa 1975

Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark;
Bears artist's name, moiety, language, area and subject on label on the reverse of frame;
21 ½ in by 13 ⅜ in (55 cm by 34 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted in Western Arnhem Land

Sotheby's, Melbourne, *Aboriginal and Oceanic Art*, 24 November 2009, lot 50

Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

$ 7,000 – 10,000

See Djon Mundine et al., *They Are Meditating: Bark Paintings from the MCA's Arnott's Collection*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2008, p. 180, for a closely related example.

PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF JAMES WOLFENSOHN, NEW YORK

LOT 35

ANATJARI (YANYATJARRI) TJAKAMARRA

Circa 1938-1992

Tjilingaanya, 1982

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
Bears artist's name and Papunya Tula catalogue number AT820614 on the reverse;
unframed: 47 in by 59 in (121 by 152 cm);

PROVENANCE

Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs

James Wolfensohn, New York

$ 30,000 – 50,000



The original Papunya Tula Artists documentation reads, "The artist has shown the site of Tjilingaanya near Lake McDonald far to the west of Alice Springs. Two Python Ancestors stopped at this site during their travels east. Their mythological camp is now marked by a large depression where the snakes are said to have slept. The central section of the painting depicts this area with the roundels being rockholes and the sinuous lines the waterways. The artist has shown the footprints of a women who was travelling in the area also ceremonial head-dress worn by women and a woman's fighting club. The irregular shapes on either side of the painting are sandhills while the roundels are waterholes."

Yanyatjarri (Anatjari) Tjakamarra was one of the last arrivals to Papunya (1966) from living a hunting and gathering life in the bush and began painting with the Papunya Tula Artists only five years after, as a young middle-aged man. Tjakamarra was a precise and thoughtful man, both in his everyday life and as a painter, and his early paintings were all very carefully executed and delineated. As written elsewhere (Myers 1999, 2002), Tjakamarra's early paintings in the 1970s can be seen as virtuoso acts of experimentation with simple forms; their arrangement is evidence of a trajectory of almost systematic innovation. By the mid-1970s, Tjakamarra's work was beginning to be recognized and he was among the leading artists who were given larger canvases to paint by the managers of Papunya Tula. There are significant continuities in themes in his work, viewed over time, and the painting here - acquired and held by James Wolfensohn for over two decades - is a striking example of some of Yanyatjarri's most exemplary work.

One can trace the themes of this work from 1982, identified with the place Tjilingaanya, documented as Two Pythons (Kuniya Kutjarra) Tjukurrpa and "a woman" (also Tjukurrpa) with other paintings, large and small, but it most particularly extends some other large works that have been documented and the comparison with those works allows for a more detailed understanding of this painting as well as its evolution. With the help of documentation of a large painting from 1975 and another from 1988 (in the Kluge-Ruhe Collection, purchased from one of the first shows at John Weber Gallery in 1989), one can recognize that there are two sets of "human" footprints, said to be "a woman", on either side of a central composition. There are, here, two different "women" ancestors (not to be confused with the Two Women Dreaming stories), two distinct storylines. From the earlier and later paintings (see Myers and Skerritt, *Irritja Kuwarri Tjungu: Past and Present Together. Fifty Years of Papunya Tula Artists*, Charlottesville, 2021, p. 179 for the 1988 painting in the Kluge-Ruhe Collection), one can conclude that these are two different, distinct Tjukurrpa (or ancestral) women, and their identity as women is further marked by the depiction of a mawulyarri, a necklace worn by women made of possum tails strung on hairstring. These are not "headdresses," as the documentation wrongly suggests, and Tjakamarra has used the mawulyarri in both of the other paintings with women's footprints surrounding a central composition. In the 1982 painting, one might suggest that one of the women's footprints is the often-depicted ancestral Snake Woman, Kutungu, who journeys eastward across Pintupi country to Muruntji. Presumably, she crossed the path of the Two Pythons. The other ancestral woman, as documented in the earlier and later paintings, was travelling westward from the Docker River area, and she is depicted with the mawulyarri and the kuturu (digging stick, or fighting club).

The central composition, documented as the Two Python ancestors and identified with the sinuous waterways left behind by their movements, is very clearly and precisely painted. The use of the yellow for two sets of sinuous lines is not discussed in the documentation, but Tjakamarra several times has used yellow paint to indicate the ancestral being, also a snake, the poisonous (or "cheeky") death adder (Nyuna), who he described as leading the Two Python ancestors on these travels. These ancestral beings are described as closely associated with the landscape features of Tjilingaanya, west of Lake Macdonald.

While drawing on the general structure of the women ancestors bounding the central figures, in this painting, the central composition really bursts into view with a striking depiction of their presence in the landscape. It is not only the focus of the painting by virtue of its placement, but Tjakamarra has chosen to use the boldest colors of his palette to bring this story and place into view.

Fred Myers, Silver Professor of Anthropology, New York University, 2022

See Fred Myers, *Painting Culture: The Making of an Aboriginal High Art*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 2002, pp. 102-105, for field notes and discussion of a closely related painting by the artist depicting the same subject matter entitled *Big Map of Country*.



PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF DAVID LARWILL

LOT 36

YALA YALA GIBBS TJUNGURRAYI

Circa 1928 - 1998

Possum Dreaming at Wapintja, 1989

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
Bears the artist's name, dimensions and Papunya Tula Artists catalogue number YY890798 on reverse;
59 ⅞ in by 36 ¼ in (152 cm by 92 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Kintore in 1989 for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, Northern Territory

David Larwill, Melbourne

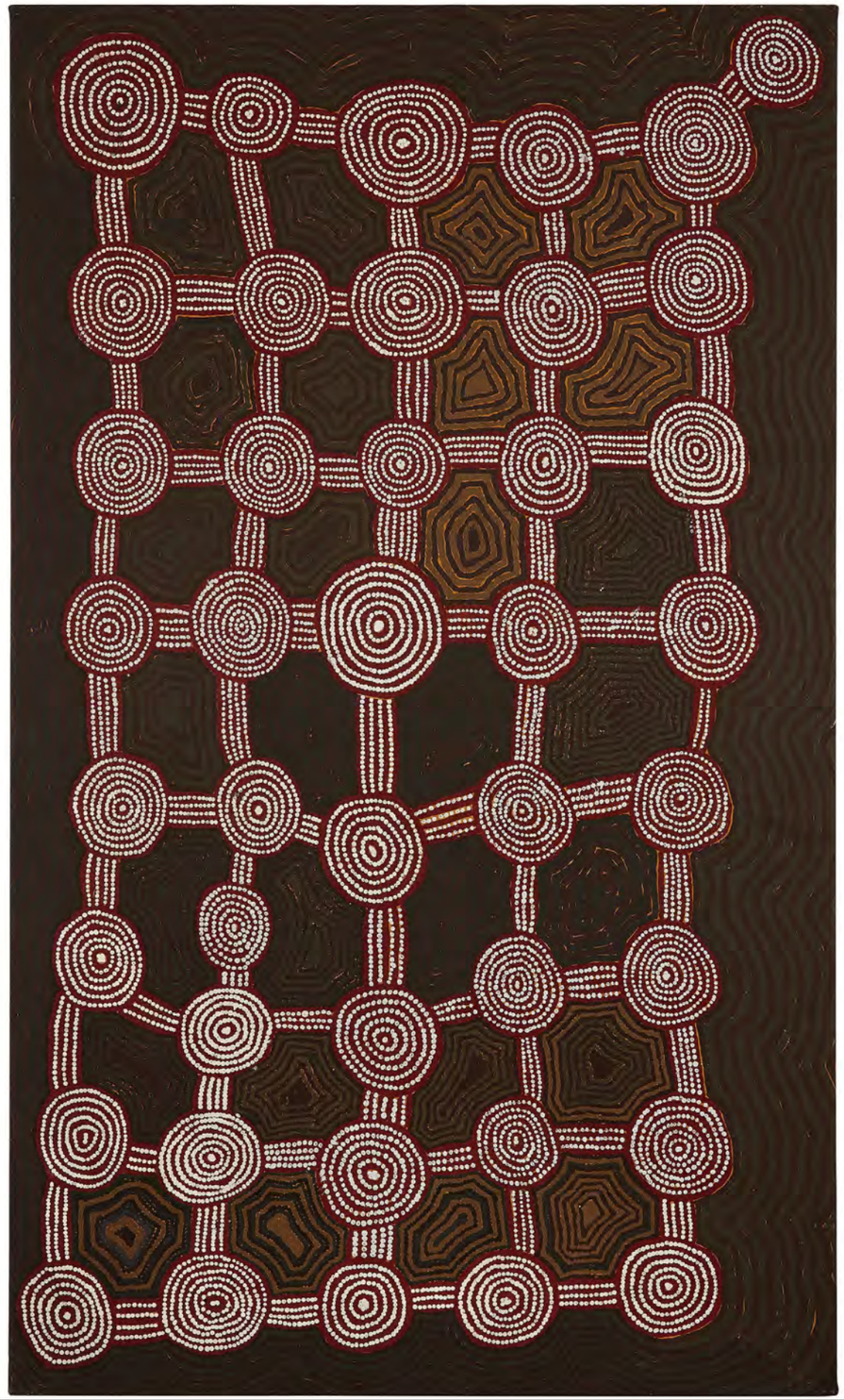
$ 15,000 – 25,000

One of the doyens of the Western Desert painting movement, Yala Yala Gibbs Tjungurrayi belonged to the initial group of artists at the settlement of Papunya who commenced painting in the introduced materials of acrylic and composition board in 1971. A member of the Pintupi language group, Tjungurrayi translated the designs associated with the ancestral Tingari beings and their esoteric teachings traditionally etched into the surfaces of ritual objects onto canvas.

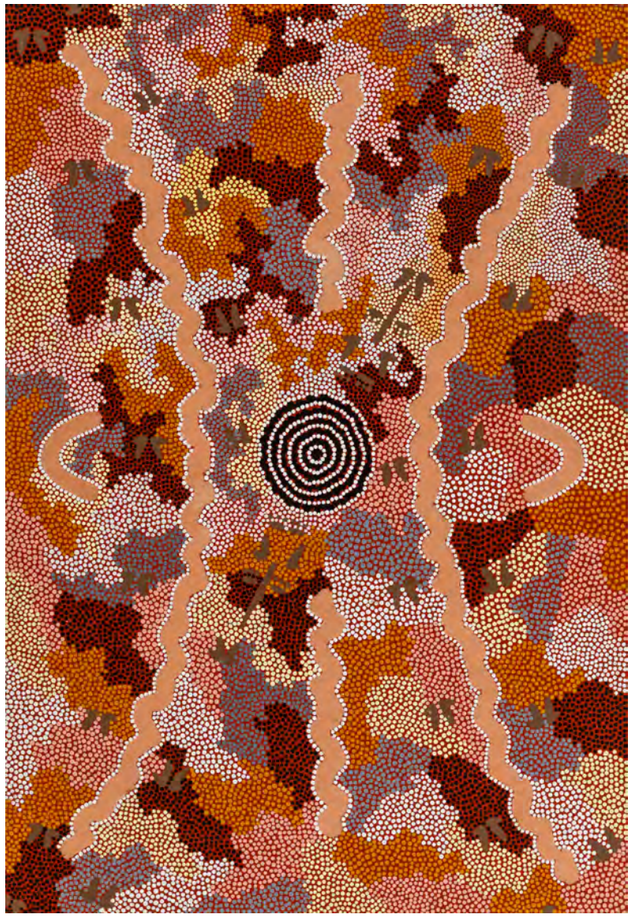
Possum Dreaming at Wapintja, 1989, is a representation of a classical Pintupi design that is composed as a grid formed by sets of concentric circles, indicating significant places, joined by bands of parallel straight lines indicating the journeys of the Tingari across the desert landscape, from one site to another. Pintupi paintings such as this excluded practically all other elements of the iconography of desert graphic art to produce minimal images that allow the eye to wander across the canvas, evoking the essence of the spiritual powers embedded in the earth by the Tingari.

Wally Caruana

Wally Caruana is an independent curator and consultant specialising in Australian Aboriginal art, and director of Caruana Fine Art. From 1984 to 2001 Caruana was the curator of the Aboriginal art collection at the National Gallery of Australia.



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LOT 37

CLIFFORD POSSUM TJAPALTJARRI

Circa 1932 - 2002

Rock Wallaby Dreaming, 1989

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
Bears catalogue number CF - 8908 - A, and other indecipherable inscriptions on the reverse;
45 ½ in by 31 in (116 cm by 78.9 cm);

PROVENANCE

Commissioned by the vendor in 1989 via the Centre for Aboriginal Artists, Alice Springs

The painting is sold with the original Centre for Aboriginal Artists documentation, catalogue number CPT 8908-01, signed by Anthony Wallis, then Managing Director of Aboriginal Art Australia

$ 8,000 – 12,000

For further reading about the impact Clifford Possum had on the Aboriginal art world, see Vivien Johnson, *Tradition Today: Indigenous Art In Australia*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004, p. 146.

"Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri joined Papunya Tula Artists in February 1972 and was one of their founding directors. He rapidly distinguished himself as one of the company's most accomplished and inventive artists, an exponent of striking, multi-layered and meticulously rendered visual effects. He was chosen by Papunya Tula Artists to paint, with his brother Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri, the large canvas that became Warlugulong, 1976, for a BBC documentary, Desert Dreamers' [...] Tjapaltjarri was chairperson of Papunya Tula Artists during the early 1980s. In 1988, the Institute of Contemporary Art in London organised a retrospective - it was Tjapaltjarri's first solo exhibition and the first time an Australian Aboriginal artist had been honoured in this way by the international art world. Over the next decade he would become the most widely travelled Aboriginal artist of his generation and an ambassador for Aboriginal art around the world." (*ibid.*)



LOT 38

CLIFFORD POSSUM TJAPALTJARRI

Circa 1932 - 2002

Cunga (Women's) Dreaming, 1989

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
49 ½ in by 61 in (125.7 by 60.8 cm);

PROVENANCE

Commissioned by the vendor in 1989 via the Centre for Aboriginal Artists, Alice Springs

The painting is sold with the original Centre for Aboriginal Artists documentation, catalogue number CPT 8908-02, signed by Anthony Wallis, then Managing Director of Aboriginal Art Australia

$ 6,000 – 8,000

PROPERTY FROM A EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 39

ANATJARI (YANYATJARRI) TJAKAMARRA

CIRCA 1938 - 1992

Tingari Men's Campsites, 1989

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
Bears John Weber Gallery, New York, label on stretcher on the reverse;
71 ⅞ in by 47 ⅞ in (183 by 122 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted in the Ngaanyatjarra community of Tjukurla, Western Australia, in 1989 for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, Northern Territory

John Weber Gallery, New York

European Private Collection, acquired from the above in 1989

EXHIBITED

John Weber Gallery, *Anatjari Tjakamarra*, 2-23 December 1989, New York

$ 70,000 – 120,000

"I like the way they move the paint around."[1] These words were uttered by John Weber (1932-2008) in 1989 to explain his interest in the paintings of the Papunya Tula artists as he mounted two major exhibitions of their work at his gallery in New York. The first, *Papunya Tula: Paintings from Australia's Western Desert*, followed the ground-breaking exhibition *Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia* at the Asia Society Galleries in New York.

In December 1989, Weber devoted an entire show to the recent paintings of Anatjari Tjakamarra, the first solo exhibition of an Indigenous Australian artist in a private gallery in New York. This exhibition included *Kirritjinya*, 1989. The Metropolitan Museum of Art made a significant statement in its long history of collecting the art of the world with the acquisition of Tjakamarra's Tingari Cycle Dreaming at Paratjakutti, 1989, from the exhibition: this was the first painting by a living Australian Aboriginal artist and the first work by any Indigenous artist to enter the Museum's collection of Modern and Contemporary Art.

Anatjari Tjakamarra was a member of the very first group of artists at the government settlement of Papunya to take up painting in synthetic paints in 1971. The group initiated a movement that revolutionized the art of the Western Desert and in turn Australian art history, and that is now recognized throughout the world of contemporary art. However, throughout his painting career, Anatjari maintained a conservative attitude in preserving Pintupi culture in the face of the dramatically changing social and cultural conditions imposed by the new regime. He and his family were among the last Pintupi people to have walked from their remote traditional lands in the Gibson Desert to resettle at Papunya far to the east in 1966. Nonetheless, Anatjari continued to yearn for his homelands and, in the early 1980s, he led a group in establishing an outstation at Tjukurla, between Kintore and Docker River, on Ngaanyatjarra country with which he was affiliated. Here he painted *Kirritjinya* in the late southern winter and early spring of 1989.

The subject and imagery in the painting are comparable to that in Anatjari's Women's Dreaming that appeared on the invitation to his solo show at the John Weber Gallery, and to the Metropolitan's Tingari Cycle Dreaming at Paratjakutti. All three works were painted in the same year.

Wally Caruana

Wally Caruana is an independent curator and consultant specialising in Australian Aboriginal art, and director of Caruana Fine Art. From 1984 to 2001 Caruana was the curator of the Aboriginal art collection at the National Gallery of Australia.

1. Fred Myers, *Painting Culture: The Making of an Aboriginal High Art*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 2002, p. 282.



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PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 40

EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE

Circa 1910 - 1996

Alhalkere - Old Man Emu with Babies, 1989

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, bears artist's name, title, Delmore Gallery catalogue number A248, and 1998 retrospective gallery label on the reverse;
59 ¾ in by 48 in (152 cm by 122 cm);

$ 500,000 – 800,000

PROVENANCE

Commissioned by Delmore Gallery in 1989

Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, acquired from the above in 1989

Sotheby's, Melbourne, *Important Aboriginal Art*, 29 June 1998, lot 36

American Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

LITERATURE

Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, ed., *Emily Kame Kngwarreye*, Melbourne, 1990

Takeo Uchiyama, ed., *Crossroads - Towards a New Reality: Aboriginal Art from Australia*, National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, 1992, p. 94, cat. no. 76

Margo Neale, et al., *Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Alhalkere: Paintings from Utopia*, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 1998, p. 48, pl. 28, cat. no. 48

Susan McCulloch, *Contemporary Aboriginal Art: A Guide to the Rebirth of an Ancient Culture*, McCulloch and McCulloch Australian Art Books, Sydney, 2001, pp. 88-89

EXHIBITED

Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, *Paintings by Emily Kame Kngwarreye*, 1990

The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, *Crossroads - Towards a New Reality: Aboriginal Art from Australia*, 22 September - 8 November 1992; additional venue: The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 17 November - 20 December 1992

Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, *Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Alkalkere - Paintings from Utopia*, 20 February - 13 April 1998; additional venues: The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 15 May - 19 July 1998; The National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 8 September - 22 November 1998



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During the earliest years of Emily Kame Kngwarreye's phenomenal painting career, the theme of the ancestral Emu (Ankerr) from Alhalkere is a recurring motif. It is particularly prominent in the Delmore Gallery commissions following their Utopia start-up in mid-1989 and continues to appear in works with their provenance well into the 1990s. When Kngwarreye painted *Alhalkere—Old Man Emu and his Babies* in August 1989, she had already been working between two agents, CAAMA[1] and Delmore,[2] for several months. This expansion of her agency had importantly increased Kngwarreye's access to painting materials and the next seven years are prolific evidence that more painting was what she wanted to do—until the very end of her life.

One interesting effect of Kngwarreye's new mid-year arrangement was an element of creative crossover—points at which her aesthetic preoccupations in painting for one agent sometimes intermeshed with the other. A close connection between the two streams of work could be seen in the compelling juxtaposition of *Alhalkere—Old Man Emu and his Babies*, painted in August, hung side by side with its close contemporary, the circular September painting, *Awelye*, in the 1998 Queensland Art Gallery retrospective.[3]

Compared with the flow of work in subsequent years, Kngwarreye's output in her first full year of painting on canvas was quite modest. Works from 1989 are scarce and many are already in private or institutional collections. Even so, the small pool of work Kngwarreye did produce in 1989 is a reservoir of immense interest in terms of both her creative practice then and the extraordinary body of work that would follow. In mid-year, in the so-called 'seed' paintings, one can see the beginning of her interest in exploring thematic sequences, working in 'series', which becomes a feature of her later oeuvre. On the whole, however, 1989 is a year of singular, revolutionary works, the most accomplished of them being magnificent one-offs—paintings of the calibre of *Alhalkere—Old Man Emu and his Babies*. Kngwarreye, right from the start, revealed herself to be an entirely original, unconventional and innovative artist.

A number of key works from this period testify to the creative potency of the theme of the Emu (Ankerr) in Kngwarreye's early oeuvre. Her first show-stopping painting on canvas—painted in December 1988 for the CAAMA *Summer Project*—was titled *Emu Woman*. This experimental project with paint and canvas was transformational in the careers of many Utopia artists, but none more so than Kngwarreye. Six months earlier, *Emu Story* had been Kngwarreye's contribution to the major batik survey *Utopia. A Picture Story*. With both project themes firmly focussed on each artist's patrilineal country, Emu was the Alhalkere story that Kngwarreye chose to represent. Later, other Alhalkere stories, principally centred on the motif of the Yam, appear to supplant the Emu—but this is also a period when, for Kngwarreye, painting itself becomes the story and her subject, as she declared it: *the whole lot, everything*. Thus, the Emu is always present in Kngwarreye's Alhalkere paintings.

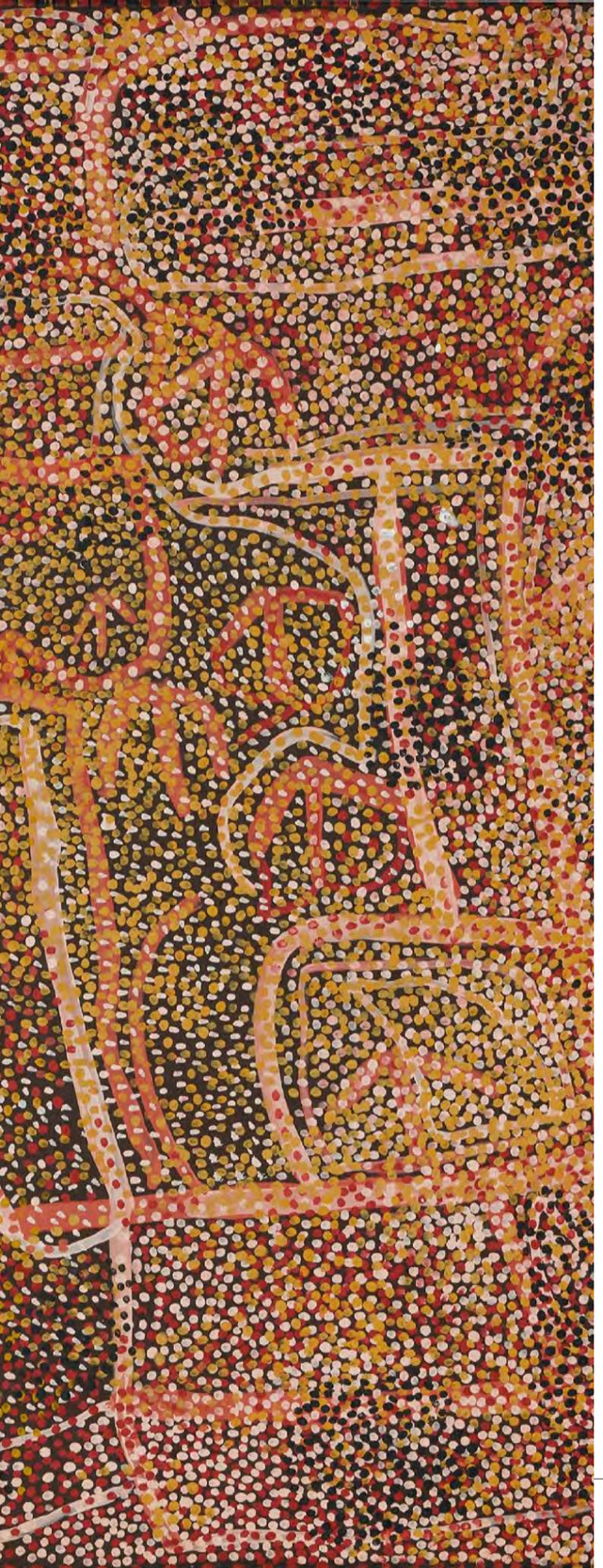
The title of the painting alludes to an important origin story belonging to the custodians of Alhalkere, the place known as country, where Kngwarreye spent her childhood. It was here at Alhalkere that the mythic Emu and his brothers emerged as central protagonists in its creation. Their foundational deeds and journeys continue to be celebrated in *Anmatyerre* ceremonies, song cycles, stories and paintings. As a senior custodian and ritual leader for Alhalkere, Kngwarreye took on a prominent role in *awelye*, the ceremonial world of women—a role that also defined her as a painter. As with so many of the titles ascribed to her paintings, *Alhalkere—Old Man Emu and his Babies* is most likely a distillation of what Kngwarreye said when she delivered the painting to her Delmore agents. However, the title possesses a degree of quaintness in English (the artist's second language) that belies the gravitas and visual sophistication of what is a complex and intriguing image.

To say that the 'story' of the Alhalkere Emu Ancestor provided Kngwarreye with a rich vein of visual material understates her creative capacity to explore it in painting. While her status as a law woman signalled knowledge of and authority over certain formal aspects of the Emu story, as an artist she seized the day in unexpectedly creative ways. Selectively painting the 'everywhen' of the Emu story, Kngwarreye's visual focus shifts between the ritual, symbolic and the prosaic aspects of her subject—or so it seems to an outsider. There are paintings in which the ceremonial body paint designs for the Emu are depicted with the discipline of a ritual specialist and others where she paints the abundance of the Emu's favourite food Intekwe [Scaevola parvifolia]—seemingly with the passion of a naturalist and the responsive eye of an impressionist. Kngwarreye's Emu story paintings are typically earthbound action scenes, pulsating with tracks, plant life, waterholes and curvilinear grids.

Against an array of Emu-themed works from this early period, *Alhalkere—Old Man Emu and his Babies* is a rare and distinctive painting. In it, Kngwarreye shifts focus from the diurnal round of the Emu, rendering instead an eerie scene of quietude and drift—drawing the viewer into a floating world of space-time, of presence and infinity, in which the linear architecture of the scene seems suspended. Even



Emily Kame Kngwarreye
1994 copyright Greg Weight



the curiously placed emu tracks, their arrow-shaped footprints, do not seem quite grounded.

In this period, new ways of painting lines and dots are always evolving and no two works by Kngwarreye are the same. However, many aspects of *Alhalkere—Old Man Emu and his Babies*—such as the variety of shape and colour in the dotting and her evanescent linear grids—can be seen in other closely contemporary works. This painting displays an unusual focus on careful drawing evident in the smooth curves of the grid lines as they navigate the lower corner and side of her canvas. The expressive, open relation between dots and lines Kngwarreye creates here is quite opposite to the majority of her mid-year paintings in which all the linear elements were blanketed under a dense surface of dots. Here lines stand out, articulating the different zones that Kngwarreye maps onto the canvas—some executed deliberatively, using thick and thin lines. Inside a number of these carefully drawn outlines are other zones that appear to be marked out for a special purpose.

All these details, some of which may appear decorative, are intended and significant to Kngwarreye. Of conspicuous interest is the attenuated curved line drawn along and around an (invisible) central axis. One of these curves harbours a single arrow-shape emu track, the locale of the footprint perhaps signalling the ancestral aura of the scene. Similar curved motifs occur in the iconography of other Utopia paintings of the period, notably works by Lily Sandover Kngwarreye, although these are often lined with rows of U shapes. This suggests that we are looking at icons representing shelters being used by women conducting ceremonies. If that is the case, and if Kngwarreye is also mapping a ceremonial ground in this painting, she has elected to leave such literal iconography out of the picture: the conceptual terrain of *Alhalkere—Old Man Emu and His Babies* is more layered and resonant, less a visual description of an event and more like a profound meditation on its meaning.

The late Gabrielle Pizzi, doyenne of early Aboriginal art gallerists, signalled the value and virtuosity of the painting by acquiring it for her personal collection. Having selected *Alhalkere—Old Man Emu and his Babies* during her first buying trip to Delmore in early August 1989, it appears that she held it over for her first solo show: *Paintings by Emily Kame Kngwarreye* the following year [June 1990], bypassing the group Utopia show she mounted in October 1989.[4] Pizzi subsequently loaned the work to two important exhibitions including Kngwarreye's first retrospective staged in 1998 by the Queensland Art Gallery. It has been reproduced on a number of occasions in the course of which it has undergone some changes of title and date.[5] Both are here correctly reinstated based on the code and the title inscribed on the verso of the canvas.

Note:

The Delmore Gallery code assigned to the painting [A248] marks the beginning of the registration system Donald and Janet Holt introduced when they established their new Utopia art business, Delmore Gallery, in mid-1989. The Delmore "A" prefix was assigned to all Utopia work commissioned in an inaugural three-month period between May and August 1989, after which each month was assigned its own letter.[6] It is known that Kngwarreye painted this work *Alhalkere—Old Man Emu* in August,[7] although exactly when—which day or days in the month—is not.

Anne M. Brody

Anne Marie Brody is a curator, researcher, and writer. Over a long career, she has developed, curated, and published collections of Aboriginal Art for the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (1980-1987), and the Perth-based private art collections of Janet Holmes à Court (1987-1995) and Kerry Stokes (1998-2010). She is currently completing a single provenance catalogue raisonné of works by Emily Kame Kngwarreye.

1. CAAMA is the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association. CAAMA Shop and its art co-ordinator, Rodney Gooch, represented the Utopia Women's Batik group from 1987 and initiated an experimental project with paint and canvas in December 1988. Gooch later continued as a principal commissioner for Kngwarreye when he set up his own company Mulga Bore Artists in 1991.

2. Delmore Gallery was then headquartered on Delmore Downs, a third-generation pastoral [cattle] station adjacent to the Utopia community in the Sandover region north east of Alice Springs. The proprietors of Delmore Gallery, Donald and Janet Holt, were the major commissioners of work by Emily Kame Kngwarreye.

3. *Alhalkere—Old Man Emu* was one of two major Delmore works [cats. 12 & 48] included in the section of the exhibition devoted to 1989. Its companion in the hang Awelye 1989 [d.118 cm] was a CAAMA commission, now in the Janet Holmes à Court Collection, Perth.

4. A painting by Lily Kngwarreye with the adjacent code A247 is cat. 20 in the Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi group exhibition of Utopia art mounted in October 1989. This artist is most likely Lily Sandover, Kngwarreye's life-long friend, family and carer. The consecutive codes suggest that Pizzi would have seen and acquired *Alhalkere—Old Man Emu and his Babies* at the same time.

5. There have been several changes of date and title. Another work of the period on the same theme [Emu] was for many years known as '*Untitled*' until The Kluge-Ruhe Museum reinstated the original title '*Hungry Emus*' based on the original Delmore documentation.

6. After August, the remaining five months of 1989 each acquired its own letter: from B (September) through to "E" (December). In mid-1991, the Holts changed this system to a different, permanent mode of registration beginning with the last two digits of the year.

7. see J. Holt, *Emily Kame Kngwarreye Paintings* 1998, p. 150. The title for A248 is given there as '*Emu Country*'.

LOT 41

EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE

Circa 1910 - 1996

Awelye, 1989

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, bears Delmore Gallery catalogue number C086 on the reverse;
59 in by 47 ¼ in (150 by 120 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Delmore Downs Station for the Delmore Gallery in October 1989

Robin Purvis Eastern Desert Art Gallery, Brisbane

Private Collection

EXHIBITED

Robin Purvis Eastern Desert Art Gallery, Brisbane, *Emily Kngwarreye*, 1991

$ 150,000 – 200,000

Awelye's certificate's number C086 means that it was the 86th painting to be catalogued at the Delmore Downs cattle station in October 1989, from a group of painters numbering about 100. Hence, this Awelye was most likely made in September or October, about ten months after Emily Kngwarreye was first introduced to acrylic paint and canvas. It had been a fast-moving 10 months for Kngwarreye, in which she was catapulted from obscurity into the Australian artworld.

In late 1988, Rodney Gooch, who was managing the batik collective of about 100 Anmatyerre women at Utopia to which she belonged, had conceived a summer painting project for the women. In mid-April 1989, 81 canvasses produced by 80 artists from the collective were exhibited at the SH Ervin Gallery in Sydney. As the oldest member of the batik collective, Kngwarreye's painting, Emu Woman, was reproduced on the front cover of the exhibition brochure. The exhibition received very positive reviews, as did six more in which she was included before the year was over. By then, she was an artworld star, its latest discovery.

Kngwarreye was still making batik designs on silk in April. She much preferred the less laborious and speedier medium of painting, and the success of the first exhibition at the SH Ervin Gallery was enough for her to commit to acrylic painting despite having completed only a few. In May, she began painting in earnest for Gooch and also for the Holts, who ran the neighbouring cattle station of Delmore Downs. Here she could paint in relative comfort and this is where Awelye was made.

The title Awelye, which refers to women's increase ceremonies and body designs relating to the care of country, was the title of many of her paintings from mid-1989. They are distinguished by a dense all over dotting animated by tonal and colour variations that create a fluid rippling on the surface of the canvas as if a breeze is blowing across it. While the painting's certificate omits a title, the description of its subject, which would have been supplied by Kngwarreye, refers to the grass seeds which are a main concern of these increase ceremonies and their body designs. The semi-obscured lattice structure refers to both the rhizomic roots of the grasses and the bands of body designs infilled with dots (representing the seeds) painted on the breasts and shoulders.

In this early phase of her acrylic painting, Kngwarreye explored the pictorial possibilities of laying densely patterned dotting over an underlying lattice structure, which ranged from the latter being totally obscured by the dotting, as in the painting recently acquired by the Tate that was completed in July 1989, to its fugitive presence in works such as this one, which was relatively common in paintings made around September, to the lattice reappearing more forcefully through the dots in later work that year. This dialectic of presence and absence would provide the pictorial idea for her paintings over the next few years, a period in which many connoisseurs believe she produced her most iconic paintings.

Professor Ian McLean, Hugh Ramsay Chair of Australian Art History, University of Melbourne.

This painting is sold with accompanying documentation from Utopia Station/Delmore Gallery signed by Janet Holt, October 1989.



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PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION, SYDNEY

LOT 42

GINGER RILEY MUNDUWALAWALA

Circa 1939 - 2002

Untitled (Limmen Bight Country), 1990

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
Bears artist's name, date 'October 90', place of execution 'Ngukurr/Limmen Bight River' and Alcaston Gallery catalogue number AWK.3 on the reverse;
63 ¼ in by 63 ⅝ in (160.5 cm by 161.5 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Ngukurr in October 1990

Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne (catalogue number AK 855)

Private Collection, Melbourne

Sotheby's, Melbourne, *Important Aboriginal Art*, 24 June 2002, lot 120, consigned by the above

Private Collection, Sydney, acquired at the above auction

$ 50,000 – 70,000

The focus of Ginger Riley Munduwalawala's art is his mother's traditional lands where the Limmen Bight River meets the Gulf of Carpentaria; it is, for the artist, 'a source of inspiration and empowerment…akin to Mont Sainte-Victoire for Paul Cezanne'.[1] Munduwalawala was the djungkayi or custodian of that country who fulfilled his duty of caring for it by painting it.

The region is a place created through the interaction of several ancestral beings, chief among them Garimala the Taipan who transforms into the rainbows of the wet seasons, drenching the land in fertilising waters. Garimala also metamorphoses into Bulukbun the fire-breathing dragon shown here, his spines bristling in anger at the transgressions of young ritual initiates. The dragon arcs over the Four Archers, a prominent set of hills which is, according to Munduwalawala 'the centre of the earth, where all things start and finish'.[2] Bulukbun is faced by the white-breasted sea eagle Ngak Ngak, the guardian of the site. By virtue of Munduwalawala's totemic association with Ngak Ngak, the sea eagle may be considered a proxy for the artist bearing witness to the genesis of the world.

The upper boundary of V-shapes references Marra body painting. Marra is an endangered Australian Aboriginal language, traditionally spoken on an area of the Gulf of Carpentaria coast in the Northern Territory around the Roper, Towns and Limmen Bight Rivers.

Wally Caruana

Wally Caruana is an independent curator and consultant specialising in Australian Aboriginal art, and director of Caruana Fine Art. From 1984 to 2001 Caruana was the curator of the Aboriginal art collection at the National Gallery of Australia.

1. Judith Ryan, Ginger Riley, Melbourne, 1997, p. 29.
2. Ibid.



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PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION, CONNECTICUT

LOT 43

MICK NAMARARI TJAPALTJARRI

Circa 1926 - 1998

Untitled (Artist's Grandmother's Country), 1990

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
63 in by 63 in (160 by 160 cm) ;

PROVENANCE

Painted in 1990 while "artist in residence" at Bond University in Queensland, during the exhibition *Aboriginal Art of the Western Desert*

Dr Geoffrey Cornish, OAM, Queensland, acquired from the artist via Geoffrey Bardon

Sotheby's, Melbourne, *Contemporary Art*, 2 October 1994, lot 89, consigned by the above

Private Collection, London, acquired at the above auction

Sotheby's, Melbourne, *Aboriginal Art*, 26 June 2000, lot 37, consigned by the above

Private Collection, Connecticut, acquired at the above auction

LITERATURE

Patrick Corbally Stourton, *Songlines and Dreamings: Contemporary Australian Aboriginal Painting*, Lund Humphries, London, 1996, p. 114, pl. 120, and reproduced on the inside front and back covers

$ 150,000 – 200,000

Dr Geoffrey Cornish OAM, attended a Rotary Meeting in Alice Springs in 1971 that was addressed by Geoffrey Bardon, in the fledgling days of the painting movement at Papunya. Following the meeting he purchased five "early boards" by Namarari and others. In 1990, with the help of Geoffrey Bardon he exhibited these early paintings and others at Bond University in the exhibition, *Aboriginal Art of the Western Desert*. Namarari and fellow artist Maxie Tjampitjinpa, together with Geoffrey Bardon, attended the exhibition in Queensland. Namarari produced one major painting, and Maxie Tjampitjinpa five smaller works while in residence. This collection of early boards and later paintings were sold at Sotheby's in Melbourne in 1994, and this painting sold for A$17,250, above its auction estimate of A$6,000-8,000, and set a new world auction record for Aboriginal Art.



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Mick Namarari was a founder of the contemporary painting movement at Papunya in 1971; he continued to paint with understated intensity until his death in 1998. Recognized for his consistent brilliance, Namarari was the 'featured artist' in Genesis and Genius, the first large-scale survey of Papunya Tula painting presented at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 2000. He was also the inaugural recipient of the Australia Council's Red Ochre Award, an acknowledgement of his 'outstanding contribution to the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture at a national and an international level'. Notwithstanding the acclaim with which he is held, Namarari remains an enigma, for he was a quiet man who for the most part, held his own council. His paintings possess a reserve characteristic of the man, yet one always senses the layers of meaning that animate his vision. Like much art from Australia's arid heartlands, Mick Namarari's paintings are more autobiographical that a simple gloss of their 'story' may suggest. Notwithstanding their apparent abstraction, Namarari's paintings reflect the arc of the artist's life.

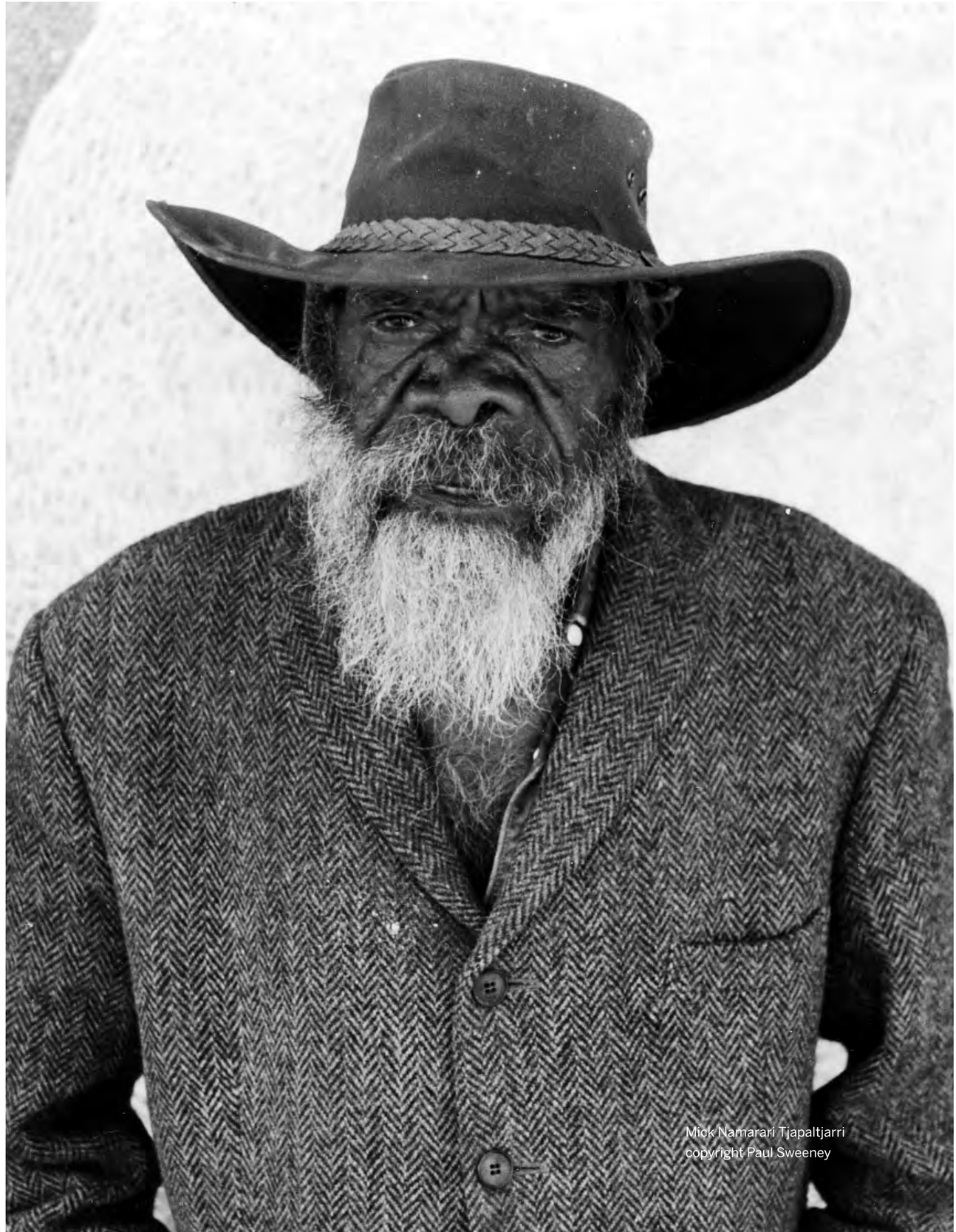
Namarari's family relied on a handful of permanent waterholes dotted over a vast land, none more important than Marnpi, a cryptic well, between two large dunes on his father's country. Pintupi people would scan the horizon for summer storms, and when a cloudburst was spotted, small family groups would march out to make the most of resources at a distant rockhole or claypan. As these ephemeral waters evaporated, the group would return to a 'fallback' water, where they would wait for the next rain. Namarari was conceived at Marnpi during an extended drought when the people of the desert faced extreme privation. After the tragic death of Namarari's father and grandmother, and on hearing of the abundant water and 'sweet' food available at a mysterious station to the east, Namarari's mother Maiyenu and her sisters, Iluka and Kurangki, followed a chain of waterholes towards unfamiliar country. The family eventually encountered Pastor F. W. Albrecht and the Arrernte evangelist Titus Renkaraka, at a tiny ration station established at Putarti spring at the base of a rocky outcrop, on the edge of a sandy plain.

Having made their first contact with a non-Aboriginal person, the small family continued their eastward journey to Yamunturrngu/Mt Liebig where they became the unsuspecting subjects of elaborate ethnographic experimentation. Scientists, including a young Norman B. Tindale, filmed all sorts of activities, took photographs, created plaster casts and made exhaustive anthropometric measurements of 100 Pintupi, Ngaliya and Kukatja participants who had been assembled for the purpose. Namarari, and several other boys who would go on to found Papunya Tula Artists, were present at this extended ethnographic circus. It must have been a bizarre yet intriguing introduction to Western culture. The year was 1932, and Namarari was estimated to be nine years of age.

When the scientific activities had concluded, Namarari and many of his Pintupi relatives followed a well-worn track adjacent to the rugged spine of the great mountain range, eventually reaching the Finke River Mission at Hermannsburg. After some time living as ulerenye (strangers) among the Western Arrernte people of the area, Namarari was taken to Utju (Areyonga) where he was initiated into manhood. After his initiation, Namarari travelled south to become a stockman at Tempe Downs in Pitjantjatjara country, where, on being oblivious to the exigencies of the cash economy, he burnt his first pay cheque. While naïve to the ways of whitefellas, Namarari was an accomplished bushman, and as opportunities arose, he accompanied older countrymen out west, following familiar routes and sacred songlines. It was on these journeys that Namarari was inducted into the metaphysical significance of the totemic landscape, a land he had previously seen through the eyes of a child.

The course of Namarari's life had been set — periods of residency were interspersed by hard travel — episodic passages from one site to the next according to the necessities of survival, for ceremony, to visit country and to reconnect with distant kin. This is the shape of life in the Australian desert, a pattern that informs storytelling, ceremony and visual expression.

Namarari was living at Haasts Bluff in 1956 when he was reacquainted with the scientist who had taken his photograph as a boy. Norman Tindale had grown in stature since the Mt Liebig expedition. Now recognized as a senior anthropologist, Tindale was busy interviewing Aboriginal people for what would become his opus, Aboriginal tribes of Australia: their terrain, environmental controls, distribution, limits, and proper names (1974). Following a technique honed during a quarter of a century of fieldwork, Tindale asked his informants to illustrate their worldview with crayon on brown paper. Instrumentally, Namarari produced a drawing whose essential form closely resembles the central motif of Untitled (Artists Grandmother's Country) 1990. Namarari's first drawing, now in the archives of the South Australian Museum, traces his path from Ngankiritja (near the Haasts Bluff station), though a chain of nine named sites into the heartland of his country, via the site of his conception at Marnpi, thence to Nyunmanu (his mother's country) and Tjilka, (on his father's country



Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri
copyright Paul Sweeney



in Western Australian over the border with Northern Territory). Namarari drew a circle to represent each locale, while the interconnecting lines index travel between places. The resulting 'site-travel motif' is a fundamental semiotic device used for the expression of space in desert iconography.

While the site-travel motif used in his first known drawing resembles that used in Untitled (Artists Grandmother's Country), it is likely to convey subtly different connotations in the later work on canvas. Whereas the drawing is intended to show the water places that Namarari visited on return to his ancestral country, his 1990 canvas is more likely to illustrate an ancestral 'songline'. In this context, each of the eight roundels would represent a site where an ancestral hero (or heroes) created landmarks that distinguish those places into the present. Assuming this reading is correct, the intervening bars indicate the path along which the ancestor(s) travelled. The canvas is notable for the way in which Namarari evokes particular environmental markers along the songline.

The dark blue area is a rocky outcrop which is a "bad" place nothing grows there and people stay away. To the right of that (top to bottom) is good country, "plenty tucker " The bright red is bush tomato, the dark red is yams. The area (top left) is the best land of all good rain and it also has many springs. The golden square (bottom left) is very good grass country, but only in spring, it dries out quickly in summer."

The painting can therefore be equated with a 'map' that indicates the location of specific resources along a defined route. Yet the significance of the painting runs much deeper, for it demonstrates the artist's enduring association with the land of his ancestors. When painting, the artist no doubt recalled locales where his family dug for yala (yams), picked kampurarrpa (bush tomato) and collected wangunu (the seed of woolly-butt) on the songline. Thus, the artist's life experience, and his ancestral lineage are intertwined in a prolonged mediation of travel and place. The subtle repetition of form reinforces how the living present is folded into an ancestral past.

Untitled (Artists Grandmother's Country) was created at a critical juncture on Mick Namarari's artistic and personal trajectory. In the early 1980s, after decades of exile at Haasts Bluff and Papunya, most Pintupi people moved back to their homelands. They created a new community at Walungurru/Kintore, the site of a familiar fallback water. In turn, Walungurru was used as a base to support the construction of smaller outstations on surrounding clan estates. Namarari established his outstation at Nyunymanu on the Dingo Dreaming songline. Already known as a painter of elusive and varied compositions, Namarari incrementally refined his work to become one the first masters of desert minimalism. Minute variations in the viscosity of his paint and mark making, imbue his mature works with compelling yet reserved energy - like the verses of the songlines voiced while painting – uttered under his breath to be shared with close countrymen.

Namarari's canvases hum with desert heat. Over and above his capacity to evoke a particular creation story, the meaning of Namarari's mature work can be fathomed through his immersion in the infinitely repeated dotted gesture. The artist's love for his country is codified with unassuming references to water places, imbedded in a familiar and bountiful land - Marnpi, Mintjilpirri, Nyunmanu, Tjilka.

Circumstances demanded that Namarari forsake his country as a boy, yet he took every opportunity to renew his connection to his ancestral homeland as young man, learning of its mysteries beyond the horizon of recorded history. Slowly, yet inexorably Namarari returned to places where he lived as a child – naked - before contacting whitefellas and their strange culture. Fittingly, Namarari spent the concluding decades of his life reflecting in paint, his multi-levelled association with his ancestral country.

In 1994, this painting was sold with an explanatory note made by Dr and Mrs Geoffrey Cornish in consultation with the artist, that read:

"This painting shows an important place for Mick"s people in his grandmother's country, a long, long way west of Alice Springs. It is their traditional 'walkabout' route - the yellow strip from the top to bottom through a big meeting place in the centre. A river (usually dry) runs horizontally through it and good places lo dig for water are shown. The dark blue area is a rocky outcrop which is a 'bad' place nothing grows there and people stay away To the right of that (top to bottom) is good country, 'plenty tucker ' The bright red is bush tomato, the dark red is yams. The area (top left) is the best land of all good rain and it also has many springs. The golden square (bottom left) is very good grass country, but only in spring, it dries out quickly in summer."

LOT 44

EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE

Circa 1910 - 1996

Alhalkere, 1991

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
Bears artist's name and Delmore Gallery cat no. IU24 on the reverse;
90 ½ in by 47 ¼ in (230 by 120 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Delmore Downs Station for the Delmore Gallery in April 1991

Uniquely Australian Gallery, Los Angeles

Private Collection

$ 150,000 – 200,000

This painting is sold with a copy of its original Delmore Gallery documentation with notes by Janet Holt that read in part, "the central panel down this work reveals the underlying 'story' element. It also gives an interesting depth that highlights Emily's aerial perception of her country. In a layered view we can seek to understand what she is trying to teach us. Emily's 'story' is of her country called Alalgura. She has custodial responsibility for certain species. The one shown here is the important Anooralaya yam, whose interconnecting and underground roots can be observed.

Emily believes that ceremony helps 'grow up' the country and in particular those bush tucker species she 'looks after'. As well, she nurtures those women who are taking over her role. They will continue the spirit life of the bush in order to assure the continuance of the desert's life cycle.

The choice and shades of colour can show us the state of the country, with the mix of raw, ripe and dry food sources. Understanding this is intrinsic to survival in the desert."



LOT 45

WIMMITJI TJAPANGARTI

Circa 1924 - 2000

Tjantji (near Jupiter Well), 1991

Acrylic on canvas;
Bears artist's name, and Warlayirti Artists cat no 250/91 on the reverse;
39 ⅜ in by 29 ½ in (100 by 75 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Wirrimanu (Balgo Hills) for Warlayirti Artists (cat. no. 250/91)

Sotheby's, Melbourne, *Fine and Contemporary Aboriginal Art*, 28 November 1995, lot 601

The Thompson Marecaux Collection of Balgo Paintings, acquired at the above auction

Sotheby's, Melbourne, 20 July 2009, lot 45, consigned by the above

Private Collection, Perth, acquired at the above auction

$ 50,000 – 80,000

This painting is sold with an accompanying Warlayirti Artists certificate with an annotated diagram and description of the story depicted that reads: "Artist's Country. The painting shows an area where the artist spent his early years and which is associated with Tingari activities in the Dreamtime. Tjitji Kutjarra or 2 Children are believed to have camped here and there is an area nearby for women only which is believed to have been formed by a woman's tears. 'Maparn' or healing powers are contained in some rocks found here also."

Wimmitji Tjapangarti was one of the most revered artists of the community of Balgo Hills in the Tanami Desert when they entered the public art world in the late 1980s. A deeply traditional man, until 1959 he had preferred to live away from the mission at Balgo where he established himself as an influential ceremonial and cultural leader. At Balgo, amongst his other accomplishments, he worked on an English dictionary of his Kukatja language, and assisted the eminent Australian anthropologists Ronald and Catherine Berndt in their researches into Kukatja culture.

Bringing decades of experience of painting in ritual contexts to bear in his acrylic paintings, Wimmitji preferred to use a traditional palette and often would apply paint with his fingers, in imitation of a method of painting the body with ancestral designs for ceremony. The recurring subjects of Wimmitji's paintings are the ancestral beings know as Tingari, usually described as two major beings in various guises who gave desert peoples, culture, law and language as they travelled across a landscape of stony plains, sand dunes and salt lakes. Pictorial designs associated with the Tingari feature grid-like matrices and concentric circles that indicate the presence of life-sustaining freshwater holes in the parched landscape.

For a similar example depicting the same subject see *The Artist's Country*, 1989 in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, illustrated in Wally Caruana, *Aboriginal Art*, Thames and Hudson, London and New York, 2003, p. 156, pl. 134; and *Marrangu*, 1991, in the Holmes à Court Collection, Perth, illustrated in Annemarie Brody, ed., *Stories: Eleven Aboriginal Artists*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1997, p.60.



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PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF JAMES WOLFENSOHN, NEW YORK

LOT 46

EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE

Circa 1910 - 1996

Untitled (Alhalkere), 1992

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
65 1/18 in by 26 ½ in (165.3 by 67.3 cm);

PROVENANCE

Commissioned by Rodney Gooch, Mulga Bore Artists, Alice Springs

Utopia Art Sydney

James Wolfensohn, New York, acquired from the above

$ 40,000 – 60,000



PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF JAMES WOLFENSOHN, NEW YORK

LOT 47

EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE

Circa 1910 - 1996

Untitled (Alhalkere), 1993

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
Bears artist's name and Rodney Gooch MBA cat. no on the reverse;
70 1/2 in by 70 1/2 in (176 by 176 cm);

PROVENANCE

Commissioned by Rodney Gooch, Mulga Bore Artists, Alice Springs

Utopia Art Sydney

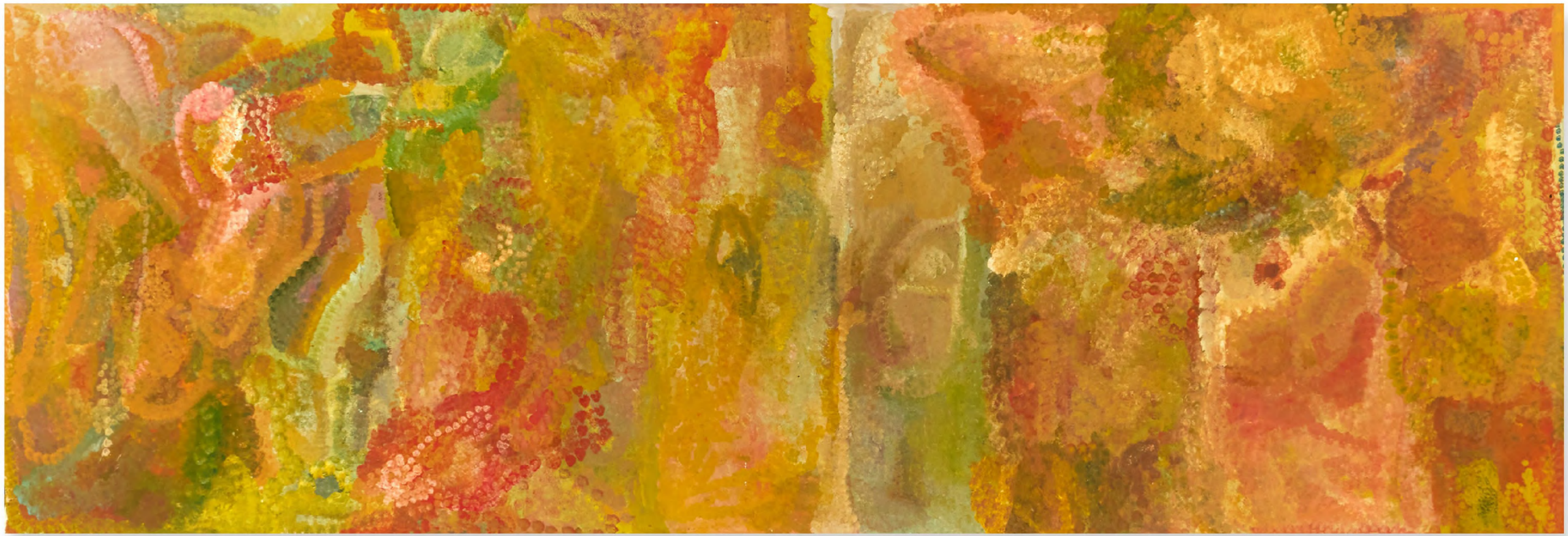
James Wolfensohn, New York, acquired from the above

$ 80,000 – 120,000



ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022

Sotheby's IST. 1744



PROPERTY FROM THE THOMAS VROOM COLLECTION

LOT 48

EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE

Circa 1910 - 1996

Merne Everything V, 1993

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
Bears artist's name and Delmore Gallery code 93L063 on the reverse;
46 ⅝ in by 138 ¾ in (118.4 by 352.4 cm);

$ 400,000 – 600,000

PROVENANCE

Painted at Delmore Downs Station for the Delmore Gallery in December 1993

The Thomas Vroom Collection, The Netherlands, acquired from the above

LITERATURE

J. Isaacs, T. Smith, J. Ryan, D. Holt, J. Holt, *Emily Kngwarreye Paintings*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1998, pp. 110-111, pl. 42 (double page illustration)

ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022 Sotheby's EST. 1744

Merne EverythingV was painted by Emily Kame Kngwarreye in December 1993, locating it amongst the last of her Delmore Gallery commissions for the year. She was then in her eighties, having painted her first work, a small 90 x 60 cm canvas, a mere five years earlier—and hadn't looked back.[1] *Merne Everything V*, with dimensions measuring 118.4 x 352.4 cm, is both a monumental and spectacular painting. It perfectly encapsulates the trajectory of Kngwarreye's phenomenal achievement at this time— just over the half-way point of her short career. Within the Delmore canon, *Merne EverythingV* aligns with other large-scale commissions, major paintings such as Kame–Summer Awelyel 1991 and *Desert Storm* 1992, painted at the height of other summers. In Kngwarreye's world, this time of year could be powerful for painting.

While Utopia artists and their extended families enjoy the western festive season, of far greater significance are the many events—ceremonies dedicated to country—that mark the Anmatyerre/Alyawarre[2] cultural calendar at this time of year. During these months, the shape of Kngwarreye's oeuvre and the subject matter of her paintings no doubt reverberated with the resonance of recent ceremonies and their power to engender new creative thinking. *Merne Everything V*, however, can also be seen to involve more than this year-end momentum. It seems equally indebted to the continuity of Kngwarreye's aesthetic practice throughout the whole of 1993—a period in which she explored her central theme, Alhalkere, in a close succession of varied and beautiful gestural works.[3]

The title, *Merne Everything*, tells us that at one level this painting is about bush tucker—food. *Merne* is described in the Anmatyerre dictionary as belonging to a system of classifying foods and is the name by which most fruits and vegetables are known.[4] Of particular interest is the qualifying word 'everything' in the title. This mirrors Kngwarreye's earlier much-quoted phrase—the whole lot, everything—her response to questions about the subjects and stories she painted.[5] Yet, while the presence of *merne* is tangible 'everywhere' in *Merne Everything V*—its story woven into all its colours and textures—what Kngwarreye might mean by 'everything' remains elusive.

As a celebration of seasonal bounty and renewal, *Merne Everything V* is grandly symphonic. The vastness of Kngwarreye's canvas is covered in the detail of her virtuosic mark making as she sets out myriad dotted 'runs, roulades and cadenzas' in painted coloratura. This lively surface is anchored around a barely perceptible rectangular grid, expressed most overtly in the vertical line that travels along the centre of the canvas. This fissure—painted in a patchwork of different widths, colours and dotting styles—creates the impression of a work conceived as two (inexact) halves.[6]

The notion that we are looking at some kind of map is enhanced by the different treatment Kngwarreye gives to this central area in contrast to the larger sections that flank it. Adding to the pictorial intrigue in this innovative and rare composition are two distinctly drawn motifs: the white form outlined on the right resembles a fragment of yam imagery and on the left, in green, is a significant, if enigmatic, oval form. Further afield, the expansive surfaces on either side of this centre zone are different—dense with diagonals, patches and meanders of dotted lines and scumbled paint.

There is much to observe in Kngwarreye's buzzing topography. *Merne Everything V* compels the viewer to engage with every motif and facet of the painting. Illusions of depth and dimension are in play everywhere. They arise in the many short and long strings of dots that power their way through clouds and gatherings of other dots—in all directions and configurations. Other bright strings loop and curve back in on themselves, returning to the picture plane. In some places, forcefully painted hollowed-out dots give way to softly painted versions that meld into flat expanses of colour. An emphatic reddish dot in the middle right of the painting carries the imprint of splaying bristles where the brush has pounded down. Amidst all of this, Kngwarreye's evocative palette establishes a broad pictorial unity interlaced with exquisite local harmonies.

Nothing in *Merne Everything V* is predictable and while many elements and marks might seem random and accidental, others are so specific they remind us that Kngwarreye knows exactly what is being painted each time her brush strikes the canvas. Occasionally a motif or a colour surprisingly surfaces, taking the viewer back to other paintings from other years.

In 1989, her first year of painting on canvas, Kngwarreye intriguingly placed four yellow ochre 'photo-corners' as a framing device on the edges of a small canvas board—a motif that rarely appears again.[7] The colour symbolises *anwerlarr (Vigna lanceolata var. filiformis)*, the pencil yam, an Alhalkere creation story of deep personal significance to Kngwarreye. On the upper right edge of *Merne Everything V*, Kngwarreye has again painted this ochre motif (albeit only one), joining three strokes of her brush to form an emphatic border. Perhaps she did not want the viewer to look or think beyond this point—this is where her painting stops.

Note:

The numeral V attached to the title serves to differentiate it from other works on the same subject. The numbering does not appear to be about series—a familiar concept in later years when Kngwarreye would sometimes paint several canvases on the same day in a similar style. Two of the paintings in the current sequence *Merne Everything* III [93I011] and IV [93K014] were painted a month apart, in October and November respectively. They are also illustrated in the Delmore publication *Emily Kngwarreye Paintings* [1998].8 The inclusion of all three suggests that they were highly regarded commissions.

Anne M. Brody, Perth, 2022

Anne Marie Brody is a curator, researcher and writer. Over a long career, she has developed, curated and published collections of Aboriginal art for the National Gallery of Victoria (1980-1987) and the Perth-based private art collections of Janet Holmes à Court (1987-1995) and Kerry Stokes (1998-2010). She is currently completing a single provenance catalogue raisonné of works by Emily Kame Kngwarreye

1. The painting was *Emu Woman* 1988-1989, exhibited in April-May 1989 in *Utopia Women's Paintings: The First Works on Canvas: a Summer Project 1988-89. The Robert Holmes à Court* Collection, SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney, 1989, cat. no. 1

2. The Utopia community is made up of Anmatyerre and Alyawarre language speakers. Whilst people are bilingual, paintings and country are generally identified with one or the other—in Kngwarreye's case Anmatyerre.

3. The stylistic origins of *Merne Everything V* go back even further, to important CAAMA and Delmore commissions beginning in mid-1992, including the National Gallery of Australia's multi-panelled *Alhalkere Suite* painted in November. See M. Neale, *Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye*, National Museum of Australia Press, Sydney, 2008, p. 128

4. J. Green, *Central and Eastern Anmatyerr to English dictionary*, Institute for Aboriginal Development, Alice Springs, 2010, p. 148

5. PICA 1990, Artist's Statement in *CAAMA/Utopia artists in residence project: Louie Pwerle and Emily Kame Kngwarreye*, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts

6. It could possibly represent a geological (ancestral) feature such as a gully or a watercourse.

7. *Awelye* 1989 25.5 x 20 cm. see M. Neale, ed., *Emily Kame Kngwarreye: Alhalkere: paintings from Utopia*, Queensland Art Gallery & Macmillan Publishers Australia Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1998, cat. no. 13, pl. 43, p.75

8. *Emily Kngwarreye paintings* 1998, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1998, pp. 106-107



ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022 Sotheby's

LOT 49

JUDY WATSON

Born Circa 1959

shiver, 1993

Oxide on calico;
76 ¾ in by 40 in (195 by 102 cm);

EXHIBITED

Artspace, Sydney, *djillong dumularra: Carol McGregor and Judy Watson,* 6 January - 5 April 2021

$ 15,000 – 25,000

Judy Watson was born in Mundubbera, Queensland. Judy Watson's Aboriginal matrilineal family is from Waanyi country in north-west Queensland. The artist's process evolves by working from site and memory, revealing Indigenous histories, following lines of emotional and physical topography that centre on particular places and moments in time. Spanning painting, printmaking, drawing, sculpture and video, her practice often draws on archival documents and materials, such as maps, letters and police reports, to unveil institutionalised discrimination against Aboriginal people. Exhibiting extensively since the 1980s, her work is represented in all major Australian state and national galleries, and significant international collections such as the Tate.

shiver is bodily in its presence, speaking of bones and blood. The calico cloth of the work, stained red with oxide, alludes to a shedding of blood—Watson's work charts the histories of massacres against Indigenous Australians, particularly in her ancestral territories in north-west Queensland. shiver gives a sense of physical form, with the bare lines of negative space in the folds and crevices of the calico evoking a skeletal form. The image of the spine is potent for Watson, existing in her practice not only as an embodiment of physical impacts on the body, but also as a reminder of strength. Bones and spines are a "metaphor" for Watson of the backbone strength that Aboriginal women represent to their families, hers included.

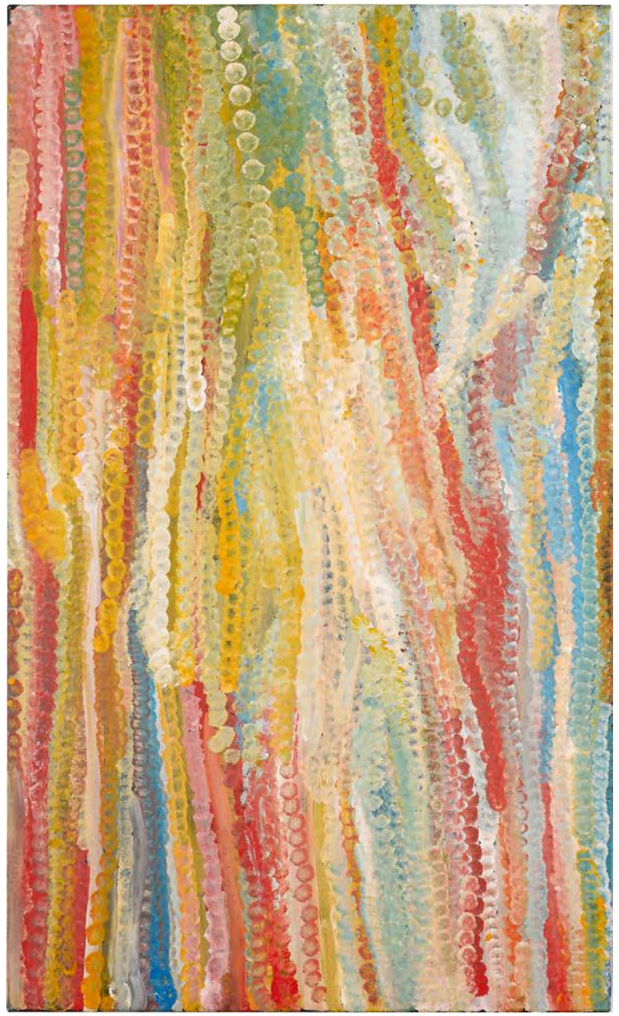
shiver is a key work from Watson's early years as a painter, in a transformative period of her practice in the early 1990s. After initially focussing on printmaking, Watson began painting on canvases and textile materials just prior 1990. She would experiment with pigments and dyeing, techniques that the artist would go on to refine in a residency at the Bharat Bhavan Arts Centre in Bhopal, India, in 1994. shiver was exhibited for the first time in 2021 for Watson's exhibition with Carol McGregor, *djillong dumularra*, at Artspace, Sydney.

In 2018, Watson's work was shown at the Art Gallery of New South Wales as part of a major retrospective exhibition. Her work is currently on display in significant exhibitions at the Tate Modern, London, the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, and the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

[1.] Louise Martin-Chew and Judy Watson, *Memory Bones*, The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2009, p. 193



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PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK

LOT 50

EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE

Circa 1910 - 1996

Untitled (Alhalkere), 1995

Synthetic polymer on linen;
Bears artist's name and the Delmore Gallery codes 94DO09 and 95D009 on the reverse;
59 ⅞ in by 35 ¾ in (152.1 by 90.8 cm);

$ 50,000 – 70,000

PROVENANCE

Painted at Delmore Downs Station for the Delmore Gallery in April 1995

Hogarth Galleries, Sydney

Private Collection, New York, acquired from the above



PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF JAMES WOLFENSOHN, NEW YORK

LOT 51

EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE

Circa 1910 - 1996

Untitled (Alhalkere), 1995

Synthetic polymer on paper ;
Bears artist's name, dated 14.4.95, Mulga Bore Artists Cat. No 23-495 and signed by Rodney Gooch on the reverse;
unframed: 29 ½ in by 19 ½ in (74.9 by 49.5 cm);

$ 10,000 – 15,000

PROVENANCE

Commissioned by Rodney Gooch in Alice Springs in April 1995

Utopia Art Sydney (bears label on reverse of frame)

James Wolfensohn, New York (cat. no. JDW-60)

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK

LOT 52

EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE

Circa 1910 - 1996

Untitled (Alhalkere), 1995

Synthetic polymer on linen;
Bears artist's name, Delmore Gallery Code 95J034 and artist's name on the reverse;
48 5/16 in by 60 3/16 in (122.7 by 152.9 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Delmore Downs Station for the Delmore Gallery in October 1995

Barry Stern Gallery , Sydney

Private Collection, New York, acquired from the above

$ 100,000 – 150,000



LOT 53

EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE

Circa 1910 - 1996

My Country/Yam Dreaming, 1995

Acrylic on linen;
70 ¾ in by 47 ¼ in (180 by 120 cm);

PROVENANCE

Commissioned by Michael Hollow and painted in Alice Springs for the Aboriginal Desert Art Gallery

Aboriginal Galleries of Australia, Melbourne (stock no. 6651)

Private Collection, acquired from the above

LITERATURE

Maryanne Hollow and Nina Bove, *Tjinytjilpa: The Dotted Design. Selected Works from the Aboriginal Art Galleries of Australia Collection*, Melbourne, 1998, p. 11, pl. 13

EXHIBITED

Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, *Tjinytjilpa: The Dotted Design. Selected Works from the Aboriginal Art Galleries of Australia Collection*, 22 March - 2 May 1998, and subsequently at five other venues in regional Victoria from 1998 - 1999

$ 50,000 – 70,000

This painting is sold with extensive documentation provided by Aboriginal Art Galleries of Australia, which includes biographical and descriptive notes regarding this painting together with a series of photographs documenting the artist creating the work in the studio of Michael Hollow's Gallery, Alice Springs. Documentation refers to the work being exhibited in an exhibition entitled *Tjinytjilpa* that toured regional Victoria from 1998, and at the Embassy of Australia, Washington, D.C., in June 1999.



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PROPERTY FROM THE THOMAS VROOM COLLECTION

LOT 54

DARBY ROSS TJAMPITJINPA

Circa 1905 - 2005

Warna Jukurrpa (Snake Dreaming), 1995

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
Bears artists name and Warlukulangu Artist's catalogue number 114/95 on the reverse;
72 in by 24 in (183 by 61 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted for Warlukulangu Artist's at Yuendemu, Northern Territory

The Thomas Vroom Collection, The Netherlands, acquired from the above

$ 7,000 – 10,000

This painting is sold with accompanying Warlukurlangu Artist's documentation with descriptive notes that read in part, "The site associated with this Dreaming is Ngarlikiralangu north of Yuendumu. The Dreaming is about the Rdajalpa (Brown Carpet Snake) that lives at Kunarrurpa in the Ngarlikiralangu area [...] The Dreaming belongs to Jampijinpa, Jangala moiety. In this painting the sinuous lines represent the snakes and concentric circles represent the snake's holes."



PROPERTY FROM THE THOMAS VROOM COLLECTION

LOT 55

DARBY ROSS TJAMPITJINPA

Circa 1905 - 2005

Pamapardu Jukurrpa (Flying Ant Dreaming), 1996

Synthetic polymer paint on line;
Bears artists name and Warlukulangu Artist's catalogue number 61/96 on the reverse;
72 in by 24 in (183 by 61 cm);

PROVENANCE

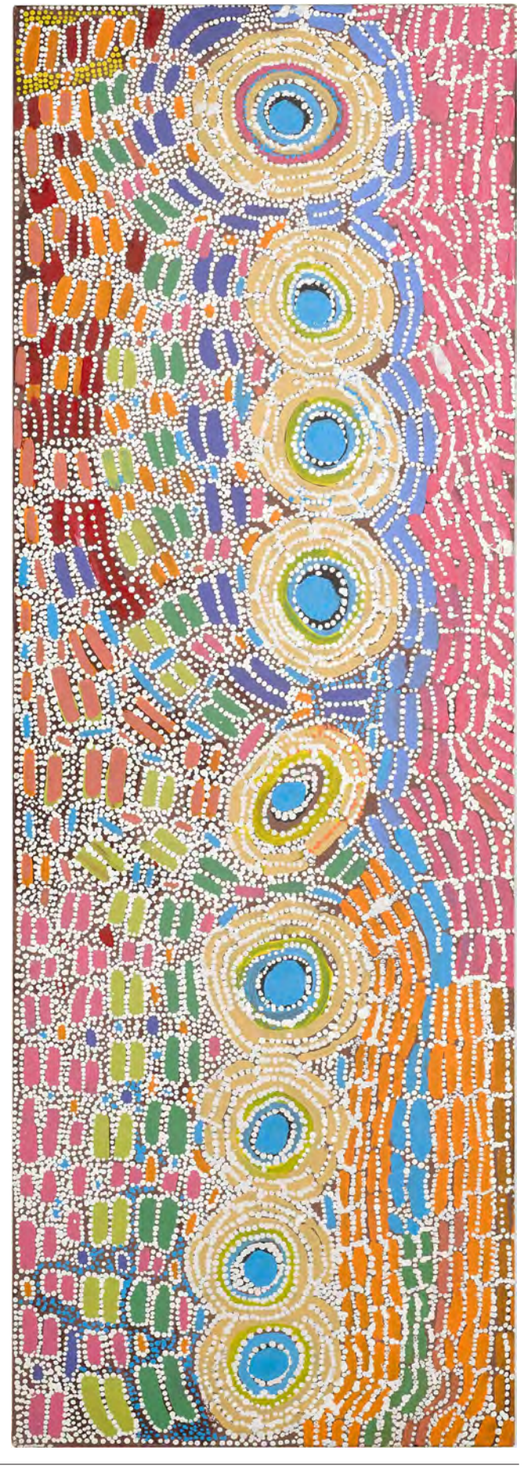
Painted for Warlukulangu Artists at Yuendemu, Northern Territory

The Thomas Vroom Collection, The Netherlands, acquired from the above

$ 7,000 – 10,000

This painting is sold with accompanying Warlukurlangu Artist's documentation with descriptive notes that reads, "People break open minkirri (ants' nest) then burn the ants that run around with spinifex, then put them into parraja. The concentric circles which feature down the centre of the painting are various sites along the jukurrpa path, and the dashes of colour around the sites represent the flying ants swarming around the minkirri (ant nests)."

According to the documentation the orange markings represent Flying Ants walking around after their wings are broken off, the pink markings are the Ants flying and the green marks are the Ants flying at night.



Sotheby's EST. 1744

PROPERTY FROM THE THOMAS VROOM COLLECTION

LOT 56

DARBY ROSS TJAMPITJINPA

Circa 1905 - 2005

Lirriwinki Jukurrpa (Skink Dreaming), 1996

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
Bears artists name and Warlukulangu Artist's catalogue number 76/96 on the reverse;
72 in by 24 in (183 by 61 cm);

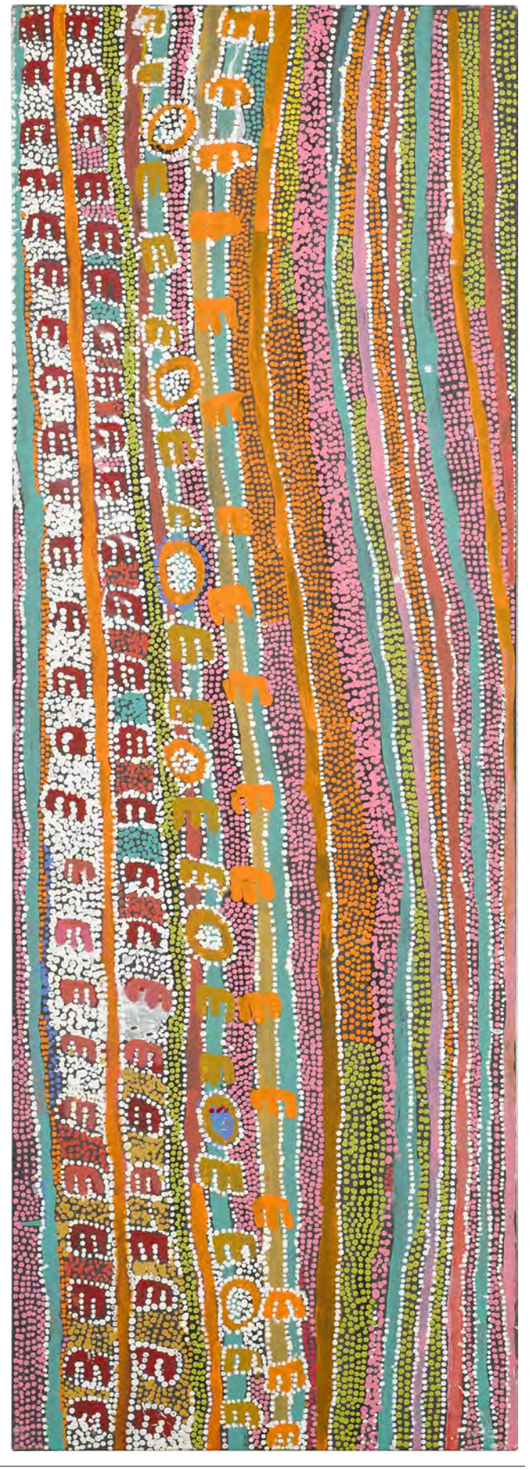
PROVENANCE

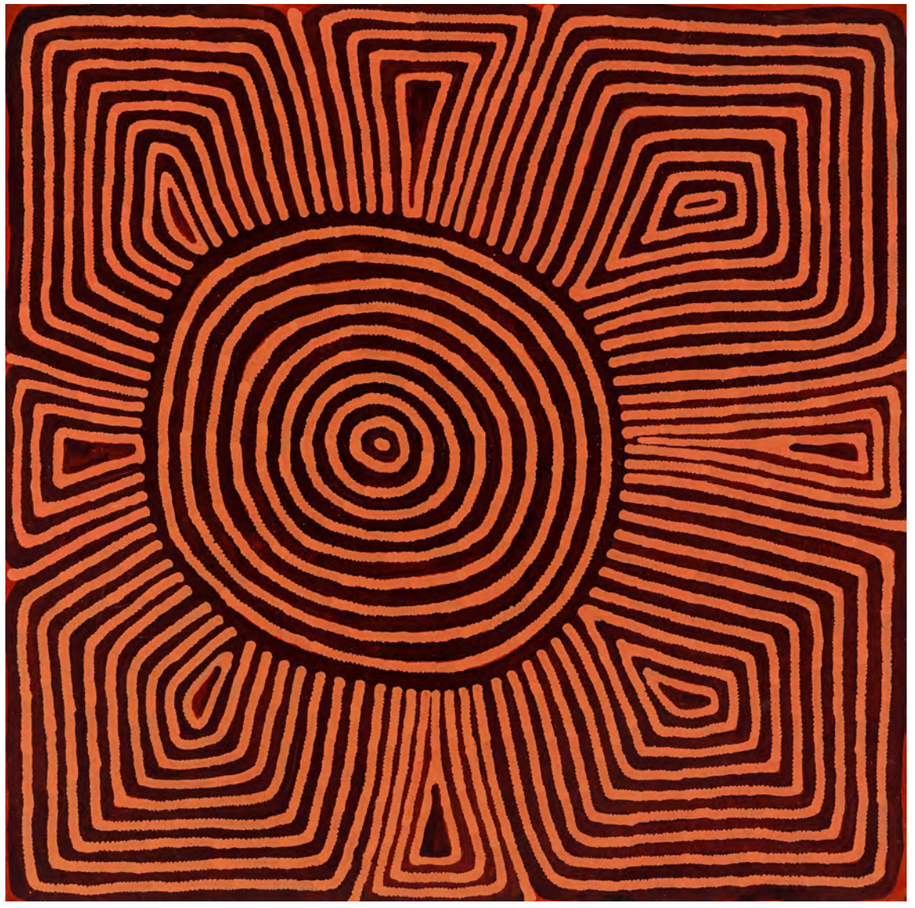
Painted for Warlukulangu Artist's at Yuendemu, Northern Territory

The Thomas Vroom Collection, The Netherlands , acquired from the above

$ 7,000 – 10,000

This painting is sold with accompanying Warlukurlangu Artist's documentation with descriptive notes that reads, "Lirriwinki are small skinks which are hunted by flushing them out of the spinifex with fire. They run out into the open and are then hit with small clubs. The variously coloured lines represent the fire burning (red, orange and pink). Lirriwinki tail tracks are in blue, left side and sandhills, blue right side. The circles depict special sites along the path taken by this Jukurrpa. Top to bottom: a soakage at Willyankamil: 3 soakages at Palpurparnta: a rocky hill and sandhill called Ngarldindingi and sandhill site close by at Kurrkarra-parnta."





LOT 57

RONNIE TJAMPITJINPA

Born 1943

Moon Dreaming at Maanytja, 1996

Acrylic on linen;
47 ½ in by 47 ½ in (121 by 121 cm);

$ 20,000 – 30,000

PROVENANCE

Painted in October 1996 for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs (cat. no. RT 9610157)

Scott Livesey Galleries, Melbourne

Private Collection, Melbourne, acquired from the above

This painting is sold with the accompanying Papunya Tula Artist certificate, catalogue number RT 9610157, which reads: "This painting depicts designs associated with the Moon Dreaming at the site of the Maanytja to the south of Kiwirrkurra Community. The design in the centre of the work shows the soakage water at the site. Two Dreamings travel through this area but their paths are either side of the soakage."



PROPERTY FROM THE THOMAS VROOM COLLECTION

LOT 58

KUTUWALUMI PURAWARRUMPATU (KITTY KANTILLA)

Circa 1928-2003

Untitled (Jilamara), 1996

Natural earth pigments and synthetic binder on linen;
58 ¼ in by 46 ½ in (148 by 118 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Milikapiti, Melville Island for Jilamara Arts and Crafts, Northern Territory

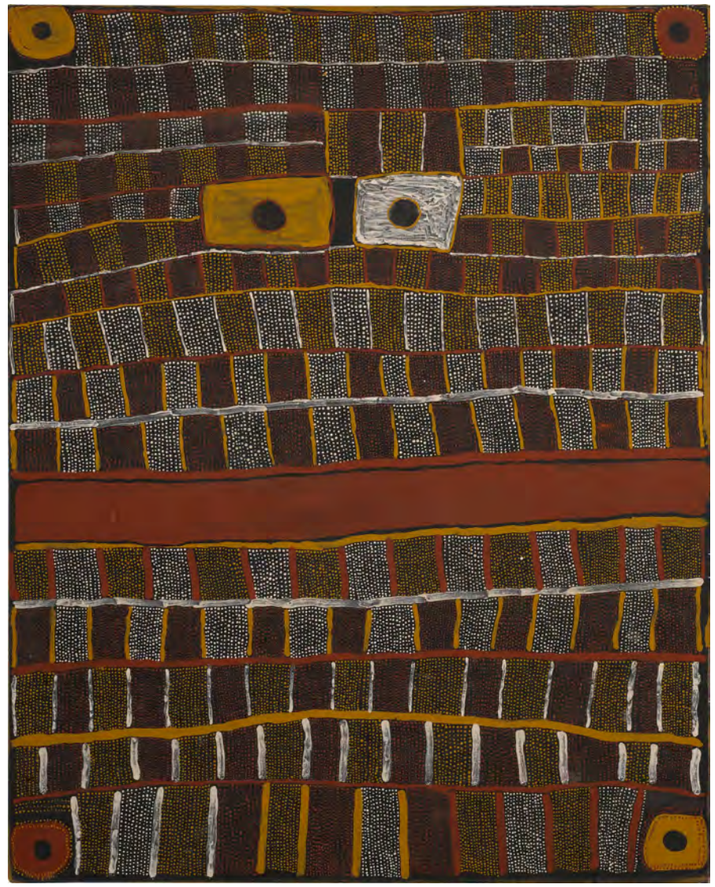
The Thomas Vroom Collection, The Netherlands, acquired from the above

$ 15,000 – 20,000

See Judith Ryan, *Kitty Kantilla*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2007, for a closely related of the same scale and year, in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, and Hetti Perkins, *Tradition Today: Indigenous Art In Australia*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, 2004, pp. 122-123; for an insight into the unique style of Kutuwalumi Purawarrumpatu, commonly known as Kitty Kantilla, Perkins explains how:

"Even within the distinctive island culture of the Tiwi people of Bathurst and Melville Islands, [Kitty Kantilla] Kutuwulumi Purawarrumpatu's work stands apart. The Tiwi people share a visual language known as jilamara (design) based on innumerable configurations of mulypinyini pwanga (lines and dots). These designs are individually conceived and used as body markings in ceremonial performance, and also transcribed onto sculptures and paintings.

Purawarrumpatu's art embraces the conundrum of meaning and abstraction in enigmatic images that do not easily oblige literal translation. Refusing to be drawn into interpreting her work for an outside audience, she maintained that '[...] it's from the old times.'" (*ibid.*, p. 122).



PROPERTY FROM THE THOMAS VROOM COLLECTION

LOT 59

KUTUWALUMI PURAWARRUMPATU (KITTY KANTILLA)

Circa 1928 - 2003

Untitled (Jilamara), 1996

Natural earth pigments and synthetic binder on linen;
Bears Jilamara Arts stamp with inscribed notes obscured by stretcher on the reverse;
58 ¼ in by 46 ½ in (148 by 118 cm);

PROVENANCE
Painted at Milikapiti, Melville Island for Jilamara Arts and Crafts, Northern Territory

The Thomas Vroom Collection, The Netherlands, acquired from the above

$15,000 – 20,000

See Judith Ryan, *Kitty Kantilla*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2007, for a closely related of the same scale and year, in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia.

PROPERTY FROM THE THOMAS VROOM COLLECTION

LOT 60

JOONGOORA BILLY THOMAS

Circa 1920 - 2012

Ginbiginbya, 1996

Natural earth pigments and synthetic binder on canvas;
Bears artist's name and Waringarri Arts catalogue number AP0818 on the reverse;
63 in by 31 ½ in (160 by 80 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted for Waringarri Arts, Kununurra, Western Australia

The Thomas Vroom Collection, The Netherlands, acquired from the above

$ 10,000 – 15,000

According to accompanying documentation, "This painting shows country called Ginbiginbiya in the Great Sandy Desert of Western Australia. This country is associated with a Snake Dreaming and there is a corroboree which tells the story. In the Dreamtime the large yellow Snake was the "boss" for the two younger yellow Snakes at the edges. He was "looking out" for them as the artist puts it. The two large black Snakes are venomonous "strangers" who came into that country in the Dreamtime. The yellow Snakes stayed in Ginbiginbiya country and are still there today."



PROPERTY FROM THE THOMAS VROOM COLLECTION

LOT 61

JOONGOORA BILLY THOMAS

Circa 1920 - 2012

Ginbiginbya, 1996

Natural earth pigments and synthetic binder on canvas;
Bears artist's name and Waringarri Arts catalogue number AP0818 on the reverse;
63 in by 31 ½ in (160 by 80 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted for Waringarri Arts, Kununurra, Western Australia

The Thomas Vroom Collection, The Netherlands, acquired from the above

$ 10,000 – 15,000

According to the accompanying documentation, "This painting shows Nganoowa Country near Billiluna, Western Australia. In this Country there is a waterhole that was made by young women in the Dreamtime. In the dreamtime some young women started to dance. They kept dancing round and round in a circle until they went into the ground and formed a waterhole. They made the Country there. This waterhole is 'living water' that never dries up and can be visited all year round. The painting shows ever tightening spiral tracks made by the women as they danced themselves into the ground.

Billy Thomas was born in the bush around 1920 near Billiluna, long before his group had any contact with outsiders. He saw his first 'gadia' (European person) as a young boy when he was cooking goanna and a stockman rode up and offerred him an apple."





PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF JAMES WOLFENSOHN, NEW YORK

LOT 62

GEORGE WARD TJUNGURRAYI

Born 1945

Mamultjulkina, 1996

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
Bears artist's name and Papunya Tula catalogue number GT9606137 on the reverse;
71 11/16 in by 60 in (182 by 152.4 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Kintore for Papunya Tula Artists

Utopia Arts, Sydney

James Wolfensohn, New York, acquired from the above

$ 25,000 – 35,000

Cf., Tingari Dreaming, 1996 in the collection the National Gallery of Victoria in H. Perkins and H. Fink, *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2000 p. 121, for a closely related painting using a similar palette.

The original Papunya Tula Artists documentation read, 'this painting depicts the large swampy area at Mamultjulkina, north west of Lake Mackay. Edible grow in profusion in this area. Amongst them Mungilpa, a small black seed, and Lukarrara, a grass seed. These seeds are ground and formed into a type of damper.'

George Tjungurrayi developed the extraordinary, graphically minimal renditions of country associated with the Tingari Ancestors around 1996. This painting is one of the first in this breakaway style that the artist continues to explore. The field of narrow parallel lines, which 'warp' towards the edges of the lower-left register relates to designs engraved on shields in the Western Desert, as well as to a conceptualisation of the physical appearance of the country around Wilkinkara (Lake Mackay) with its parallel ridges of sand dunes.



PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF JAMES WOLFENSOHN, NEW YORK

LOT 63

FREDDIE TIMMS

Circa 1944 - 2017

Frog Hollow, 1997

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
Signed and dated, and bears Tony Oliver cat. No F.T.14 on the reverse;
47 ¼ in by 70 in (103 by 183 cm);

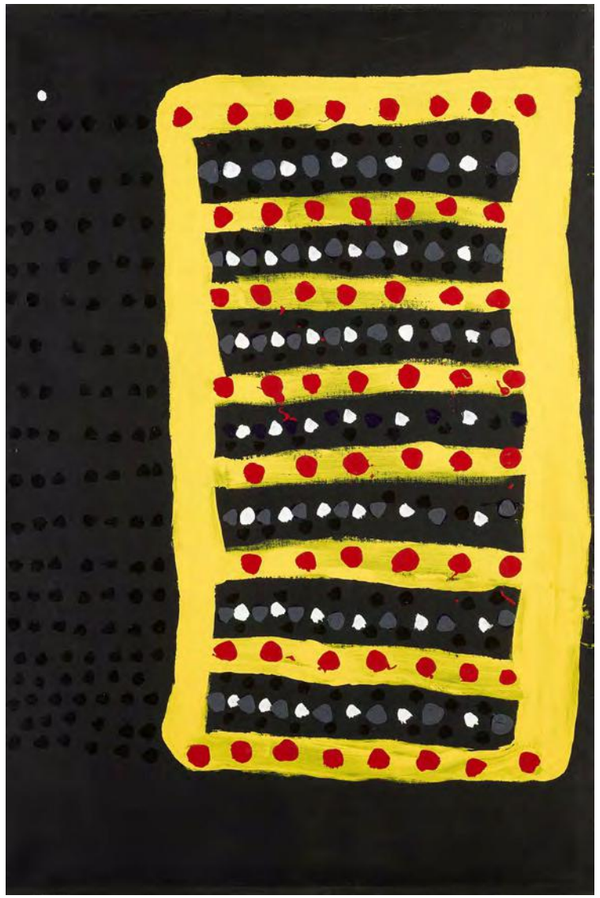
$ 12,000 – 18,000

PROVENANCE

Commissioned by Tony Oliver

Watters Gallery, Sydney (label on the reverse of stretcher)

James Wolfensohn, New York (cat. no. JDW-136), acquired from the above



PROPERTY FROM THE THOMAS VROOM COLLECTION

LOT 64

PRINCE OF WALES (MIDPUL)

Circa 1935 - 2002

Body Marks, 1999

Acrylic on canvas;
43 ¼ in by 27 ½ in (110 by 70 cm);

PROVENANCE

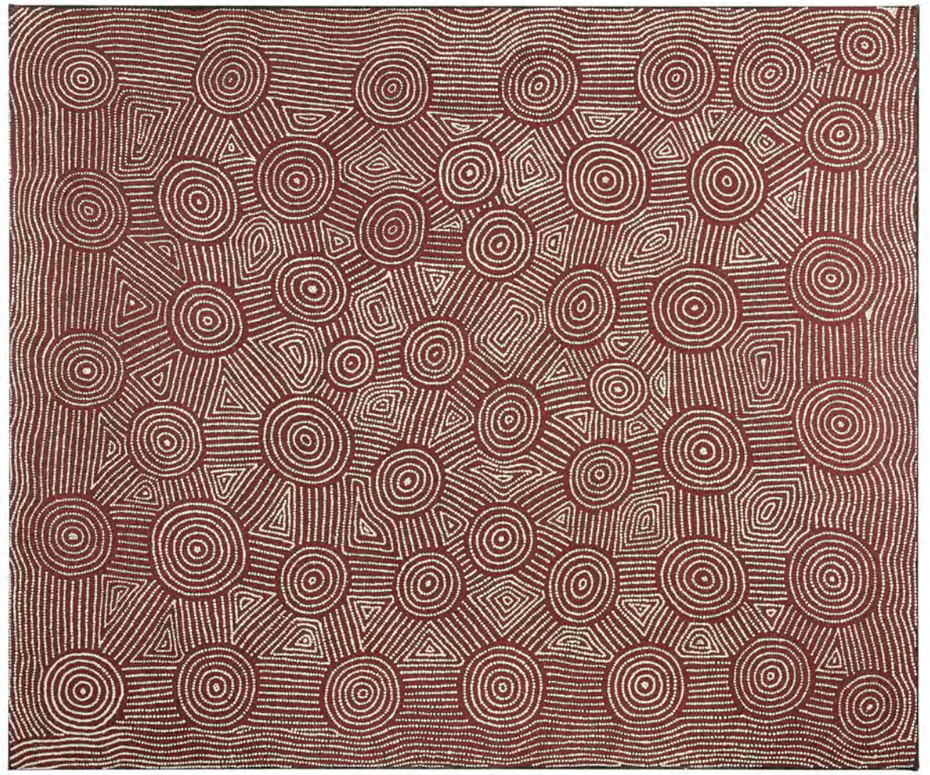
Painted in Darwin for the Karen Brown Gallery, Northern Territory, July-August 1999, cat. no. EP7

The Thomas Vroom Collection, The Netherlands, acquired from the above

$ 7,000 – 10,000

See Hetti Perkins, *Tradition Today: Indigenous Art In Australia*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004, p. 166, in which Perkins describes the artist as a Larrakia painter, singer, dancer and "celebrated performer, whether leading initiation ceremonies or performing for the Queen of England [...] In taking up painting in 1995, Prince found a medium through which he could retain the essence of his active ceremonial life. His paintings have a musicality imparted by the lively staccato-effect of dots and intermittent bars, as if to be read like the sheet music for an improvised symphony. Prince's uninhibited use of colour belies the origins of these designs, which were passed on by his ancestors as marks on the bodies of ceremonial participants. His early works were painted on scraps of cardboard and other found materials, their compact size emulating the proportions of the body. In his last years, Prince 'upped the ante', scaling up his 'Body Marks' paintings to assert his cultural authority as a Larrakia elder, as embodied in his statement, '[...] I make the marks.'"[1]

[1] Prince of Wales, artist's statement, Karen Brown Gallery, Darwin, 1997



PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF DAVID LARWILL

LOT 65

WARLIMPIRRNGA TJAPALTJARRI

Tarkul, 1999

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
Bears the artist's name, dimensions and Papunya Tula Artists catalogue number WT9910116 on reverse;
60 ¼ in by 72 in (153 cm by 183 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Kiwirrkurra, Western Australia in 1999 for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, Northern Territory

David Larwill, Melbourne

$ 25,000 – 35,000

From first contact with Europeans in the remote Gibson Desert in 1984, to showing at *dOCUMENTA (13)* in 2012 and a solo exhibition in New York in 2015, Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri's trajectory in the world of art has been meteoric. The formal nature of paintings such as Tarkul, 1999, reflects a similar transition from art made within the inner sanctum of ritual to art made for the public sphere. The work adheres to the canon of imagery relating to the Tingari ancestors. The matrix of roundels indicating site connected by the parallel lines tracking the ancestors' paths are rendered in a stylised, systematic manner to create a sensory mind-map of country and a mnemonic for the associated song-lines of the Tingari.

Tarkul, 1999, was painted in the year leading up to the landmark exhibition of desert painting, *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney, where Tjapaltjarri collaborated with a number of other male Pintupi artists to create a ground painting featuring a similar design for the vernissage.

Wally Caruana

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION, UNITED KINGDOM

LOT 66

WARLIMPIRRNGA TJAPALTJARRI

Born circa 1932

Willy Tjungurrayi, 2001

Synthetic polymer on linen;
Bears artist's name and Papunya Tula catalogue number on the reverse;
50 ½ in by 48 in (151 by 122 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted in 2001 for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs (cat. no. WT0103175)

Private Collection, United Kingdom, acquired from the above

$ 30,000 – 50,000



PROPERTY FROM THE THOMAS VROOM COLLECTION

LOT 67

SIMON HOGAN

Born circa 1930

Linka, 2001

Acrylic on canvas;
Bears Spinifex Arts Project code C.65 on the reverse;
68 ¾in by 53 ¾ in (175 by 137 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Tjuntjuntjara for the Spinifex Arts Project, Western Australia

Cooee Aboriginal Art, Sydney

The Thomas Vroom Collection, The Netherlands, acquired from the above

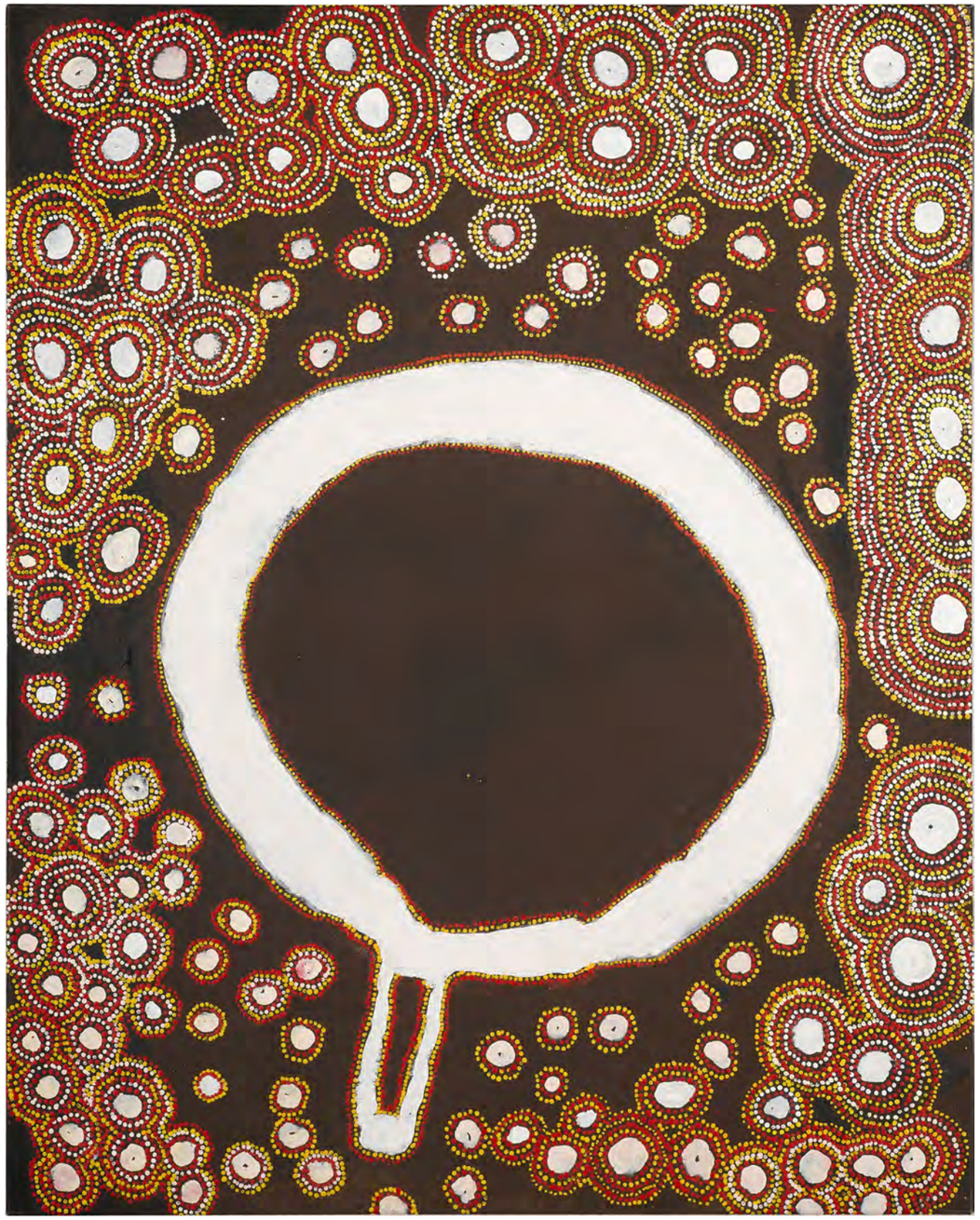
EXHIBITED

Cooee Aboriginal Art, Sydney, *Pila Nguru: Art and Song of the Spinifex People*, February 2001

This painting is sold with accompanying Spinifex Arts Project documentation, catalogue number C65, with descriptive notes that reads as follows: "Two friends, Wirratju and Walawarru (a hawk and an eagle), were camping together at Linka. Walawarru went off looking for a woman leaving his friend to look after camp. When he came back a powerful storm had happened with huge hail. Then Wirratju was dead. Furious at himself and the hail storm Walawarru thrashed about pushing up a huge pile of white fur finally turning into a rock and leaving that place, sad at having lost his friend. Linka is the rock formation still standing there."

This painting was exhibited along with 30 others which formed the first commercial exhibition of artworks, entitled *Pila Nguru: Art and Song of the Spinifex People*, painted by the traditional owners from Spinifex and Country, February 2001.

$ 5,000 – 8,000



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PROPERTY FROM THE STEVE MARTIN AND ANNE STRINGFIELD COLLECTION, NEW YORK

LOT 68

WILLY TJUNGURRAYI

Born circa 1932

Linka, 2002

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
Bears Papunya Tula Artists cat. no. WT0211025 verso;
72 in by 60 ¼ in (183 by 153 cm);

PROVENANCE

Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs

Private Collection, Sydney, acquired from the above

D'Lan Contemporary, Melbourne

The Steve Martin and Anne Stringfield Collection, New York

$ 70,000 – 100,000

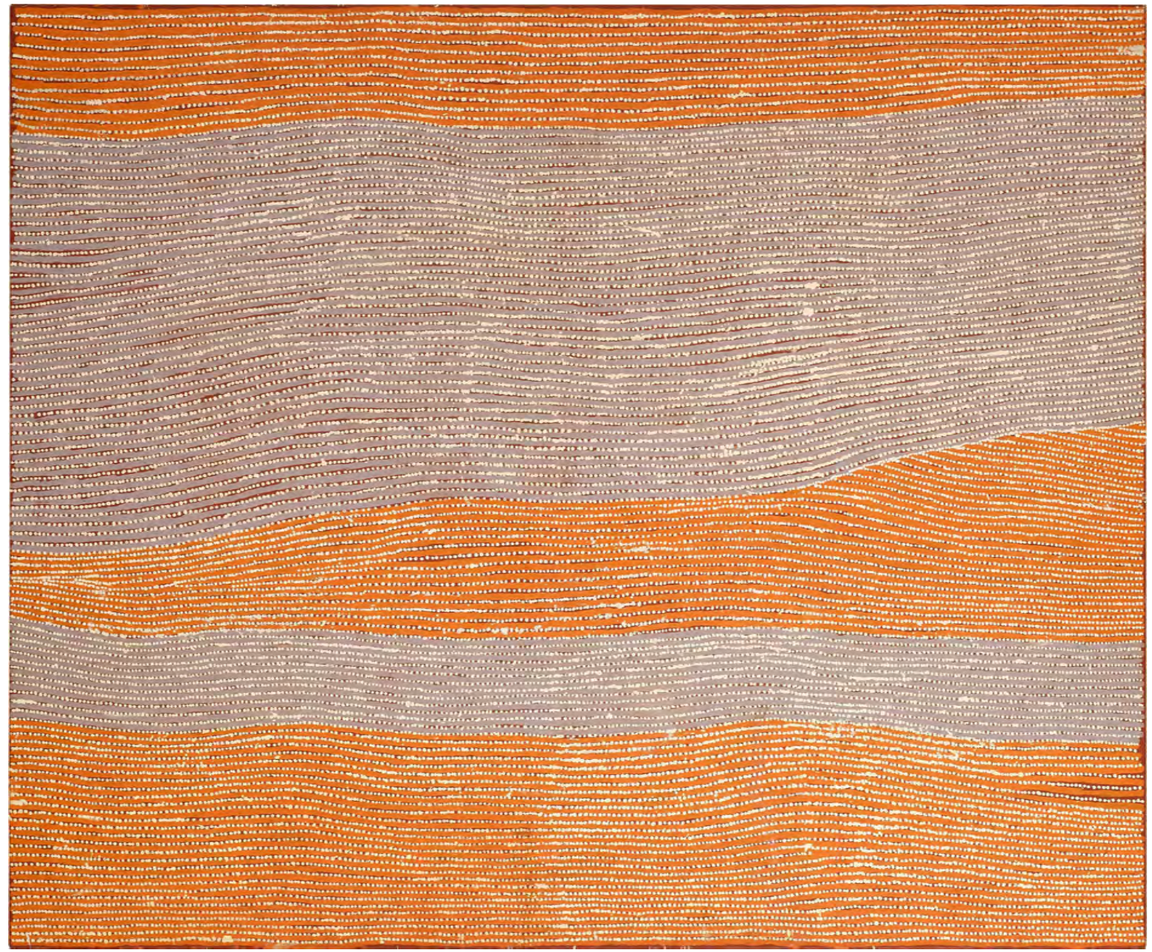
The exacting minimalism of Kaakuratintja is characteristic of Willy Tjungurrayi's mature style of painting. The younger brother of the renowned Pintupi painter Yala Yala Gibbs Tjungurrayi (circa 1928-1998) who was one of the original group of Papunya painters in 1971, Willy Tjungurrayi first emerged as an artist in the public domain in 1976. A decade later he became one of the leading exponents among the Pintupi painters of the matrix of circle and line compositions that map out the sacred sites and pathways of the great ancestors, the Tingari. The Tingari are described as creator beings who traversed vast stretches of what we now know as the western deserts of Australia.

They formed features of the landscape and endowed people with sacred law. Today, the esoteric knowledge of the Tingari continues to be taught to Pintupi through the various stages of ceremonial development. By the turn of the century, Willy Tjungurrayi was among a small group of Pintupi artists who introduced a style of painting that went beyond the iconographic elements of desert painting. Their paintings feature rhythmic linear compositions that pulsate with the ancestral powers imbued in the land by the Tingari, and by light – the physical light in the land and metaphoric light of revelation and attainment of knowledge. In effect, paintings such as *Kaakuratintja* convey a sense of the shimmering heat of the Australian desert landscape while capturing the ineffable nature of the ancestral forces that reside within it, spiritual powers that are tapped in ceremony to imbue participants within a sacred space.

Wally Caruana

Wally Caruana is an independent curator and consultant specialising in Australian Aboriginal art, and director of Caruana Fine Art. From 1984 to 2001 Caruana was the curator of the Aboriginal art collection at the National Gallery of Australia.

This painting is sold with the accompanying Papunya Tula Artists documentation and catalogue number WT0211025.



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PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION, MAINE

LOT 69

NAATA NUNGURRAYI

Born 1932

Marrapinti, 2002

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
Bears artist's name, size and Papunya Tula Artists catalogue number MN0203141 on the reverse;
72 in by 48 in (183 cm by 122 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Kintore for Papunya Tula Artists in 2002, Alice Springs, Northern Territory

Private Collection, Victoria

Sotheby's, Melbourne, *Aboriginal Art*, 31 July 2006, lot 126, consigned by the above

Private Collection, Maine, acquired at the above auction

$ 80,000 – 120,000

Considered one of the most important artists to emerge from the group of women at Kintore and Kiwirrkurra who began painting for Papunya Tula Artists in 1996, Naata Nungurrayi's artworks have continually held the attention of curators and major collectors. Her powerful and distinct paintings have been included in many of the most significant museum exhibitions, including *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 2000. Major paintings have been acquired by the National Gallery of Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and other leading institutions. Consigned from an American collection, Marrapinti is one of the artist's most significant and breathtaking paintings to come to auction in recent years.

This painting is sold with an accompanying Papunya Tula Artists certificate that reads:

'This painting depicts designs associated with the rockhole and soakage water site of Marrapinti, to the west of the Pollock Hills in Western Australia. The lines are sandhills surrounding the area. A large group of senior women camped at this rockhole making the nose-bones which are worn through a hole in the nose web. These nose-bones were originally worn by both men and women but are now only worn by the older generation on ceremonial occasions. The women later travelled east passing through Wala Wala, Kiwirrkura and Ngaminya'

Cf. For a related painting of the same site see 'Untitled', 1999, in H. Perkins and H. Fink, eds, *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius*, Art Gallery of New South Wales in association with Papunya Tula Artists, Sydney, 2000, p. 145.



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PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF DAVID LARWILL

LOT 70

GEORGE WARD TJUNGURRAYI

Born 1945

Kaakuratintja, 2003

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
Bears the artist's name, dimensions and Papunya Tula Artists catalogue number GW0308215 on reverse;
48 in by 60 ¼ in (122 by 153 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Tjukurla in 2003 for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, Northern Territory

David Larwill, Melbourne

$ 15,000 – 25,000



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LOT 71

MAKINTI NAPANANGKA

Circa 1930 - 2011

Lupulnga, 2003

Synthetic polymer paint on Belgian linen;
Bears artist's name Papunya Tula Artist's catalogue number MN0301114 on the reverse;
72 in by 96 in (183 by 244 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Kintore in January, 2003 for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs

Private Collection

The artist painted just two paintings on this scale, the largest format used by the Papunya Tula Artists.

This painting is sold with its original Papunya Tula Artists documentation that reads in part, "this painting depicts designs associated with the rockhole site of Lupulunga, south of the Kintore community. The Peewee (small bird) Dreaming is associated with this site. A group of women visited the site before continuing their travels north to Kintore. The lines in the painting represent spun and hair-string which is used in the making of hair-belts worn during the ceremonies associated with the area."

$ 120,000 – 180,000



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LOT 72

NINGURA NAPURRULA

Circa 1938 - 2013

Untitled (Women's birthing site of Wirrulnga), 2003

Synthetic polymer paint on Belgian linen;
72 in by 96 in (183 by 244 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Kintore, Northern Territory in 2003

Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs

Private Collection

$ 70,000 – 100,000

This painting is sold with accompanying Pupanya Tula Artist's documentation with descriptive notes that read in part, "The larger roundels in this painting depict Wirrulnga, a rockhole site in a small rocky outcrop, east of the Kiwirrkura Community. A number of women camped here before continuing their travels east. Wirrulnga is associated with birth. A pregnant woman of the Napaltjarri kinship subsection who was travelling with the group gave birth at the site. The arc shapes in the work are the sandhills surrounding the area. Also shown are a creek and edible berries known as kampurarrpa or desert raisin from the small shrub *Solanum centrale*, and pura or bush tomato from the shrub *Solanum chippendalei*. These are represented by the small roundels in the work."

See Franchesca Cubillo and Wally Caruana, eds, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art: Collection Highlights*, Canberra, 2010, p.63, for another example by the artist of the same dimensions, painted in 2006, held in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia.

The inspiration for Ningura Napurrula's large-scale works are the great narratives of ancestral Kanaputa Women as they journey through the landscape of what is now known as the Western Desert regions of Central Australia. These ancient stories encapsulate the songs and ceremonies the women performed thereby creating and shaping the landscape.

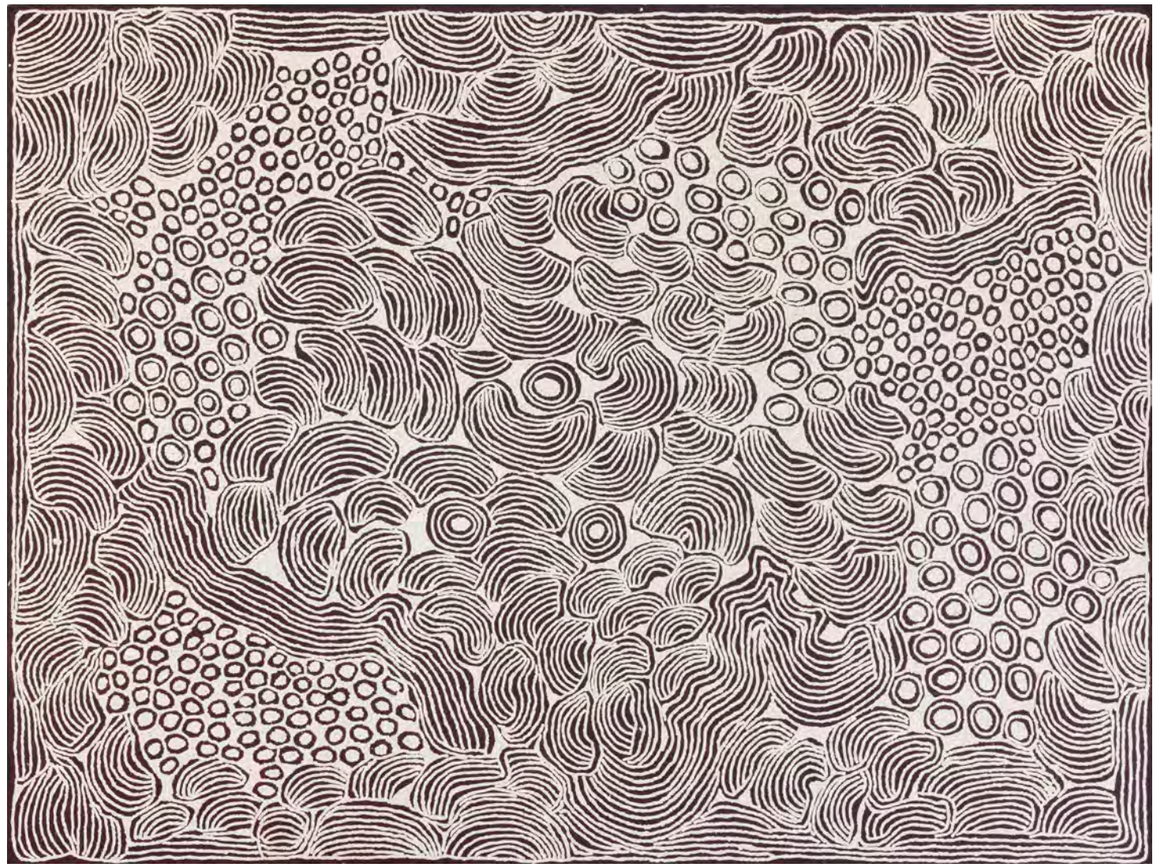
The bold iconography of Wirrulnga, 2003 maps the rockhole site of Wirrulnga, just east of the community of Kiwirrukurra in Western Australia. Wirrulnga sits within a dramatic rocky outcrop surrounded by rolling sandhills and desert flora. It is a traditional birthing site for women of the Napaltjarri kinship subsection. The small arc shapes depicting the sandhills are reminiscent of the marks that have been painted on the contours of women's shoulders and breasts for millennia. The rockhole is represented by the large concentric circles, and the twisting sinuous lines depicts the nearby creek. The women had travelled from the nearby sites of Marrapinti and Ngami. After the ancestral Napaltjarri woman had given birth at Wirrulnga they continued their journey to large salt lake of Wilkinkarra (Lake MacKay).

The clustered circles in this painting depict the edible berries known as kampurarrpa (desert raisin, *Solanum centrale*) and pura (desert tomato, *Solanum chippendalei*). These bush foods were collected by the women throughout their journey, and continue to be a staple food of Aboriginal people in this region of the Australian desert.

Born circa 1938 at Watulka near the Kiwirrkurra community in Western Australia, Ningura was one of the founding women artists from the Walangurru (Kintore) community in the Western Desert of the Northern Territory. A bold woman, her diminutive stature always sat in contrast to the large works she would sit atop of to decorate with unequivocal purpose. In 2006 Ningura was one of eight Australian Indigenous artists to have their work incorporated into the architecture of the musée du quai Branly in Paris.

Luke Scholes

Luke Scholes is former curator of Aboriginal art at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. He has curated multiple award-winning exhibitions and written extensively about Aboriginal art.



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LOT 73

KANYA TJAPANGATI

Circa 1950 - 2006

Kirritjinna, 2004

Synthetic polymer paint on Belgian linen;
Bears artists name and Papunya Tula catalogue number KT041026 on the reverse;
60 ¼ in by 72 in (153 by 183 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Kiwirrkurra, Western Australia, in September 2004 for Papunya Tula Artists

Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne

Private Collection, Sydney, acquired from the above

$ 40,000 – 60,000

This painting is accompanied by its original Papunya Tula Certificate. Since his untimely passing in 2006, the stylistic innovation of Kanya Tjapangati and his remarkable oeuvre remains unheralded. Largely overshadowed by Western Desert luminaries such as Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri (circa 1927-1998), and Ronnie Tjampitjinpa (born circa 1943), Kanya created paintings of controlled dynamism and integrity. However, within his home community of Kiwirrkurra, situated over 400 miles west of Alice Springs in Central Australia, his unique practice was highly revered. In the absence of many senior women artists at Kiwirrkurra, it was Kanya's minimal aesthetic that inspired a generation of female Pintupi artists. Yukultji Napangati, Doreen Reid Nakamarra and Mantua Nangala have all, to varying extents, been influenced by Kanya's austere paintings.

A tall, gentle, man, Kanya drew upon the ancestral narratives of his Tingarri ancestors as the basis for his artistic practice. Tingarri stories continue to form part of the teachings of post-initiatory Pintupi youths across the Western Desert regions of Central Australia. Many of Kanya's late-career works reference the journeys the Tingarri men made across country shaping the landscape with their ceremonies, songs and activity.

Kirritjinna, 2004 is a fine late-career example of Kanya's subtle genius. Here his use of rippling contours and shifting pigments evoke the seen, and unseen, patterns of the Australian desert. Viewed from afar, his use of repetitious line, and depiction of space, captures the vast landscapes of the desert interior. Up close, however, his gently serrated lines, applied with the chewed end of the eucalyptus twig, hum with deceptive intensity.

Luke Scholes

Luke Scholes is former curator of Aboriginal art at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. He has curated multiple award-winning exhibitions and written extensively about Aboriginal art.



ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022 Sotheby's

LOT 74

WARLIMPIRRNGA TJAPALTJARRI

Born circa 1958

Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay), 2004

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
Bears artists name and Papunya Tula catalogue number WT0411012 on the reverse;
72 in by 47 ½ in (183 by 121 cm);

PROVENANCE

Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs

Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane

Private Collection, Brisbane, acquired from the above

Bonhams, Sydney, *Important Australian Art*, 22 April 2021, lot 19, consigned by the above

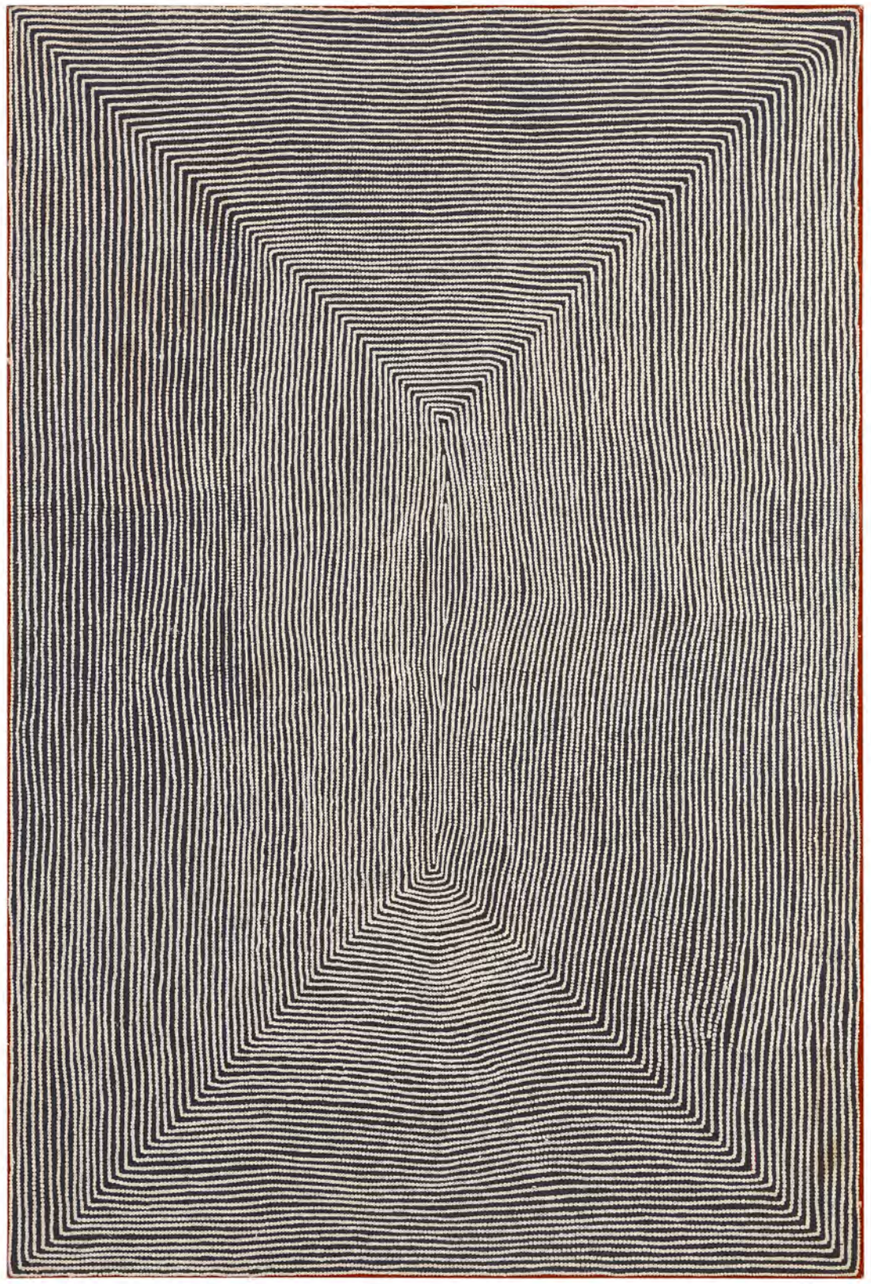
Private Collection, Sydney, acquired at the above auction

EXHIBITED

Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane, in association with Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, *Aboriginal Art*, 1 - 23 June 2007

$ 60,000 – 80,000

This painting is accompanied by Papunya Tula Artists documentation that reads, "This painting depicts designs associated with Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay). In mythological times a large group of Tingari Men started from this site and travelled in a large circle eventually returning to Lake Mackay. Since events associated with the Tingari Cycle are of secret nature no further details was given. Generally, the Tingari are a group of mythical characters of the Dreaming who travelled over vast stretches of the country, performing rituals and creating and shaping particular sites. The Tingari Men were usually followed by the Tingari Women and accompanied by novices and their travels and adventures are enshrined in a number of song cycles. These mythologies form part of the teachings of the post initiatory youths today as well as providing explanations for contemporary customs."



ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022 Sotheby's

LOT 75

TJUMPO TJAPANANGKA

Circa 1929 - 2007

Wati Kutjarra (Two Brothers), 2004

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
Bears artists name and Warlayirti Artists catalogue number 500/04 on the reverse;
59 in by 71 in (150 by 180 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Wirrimanu, Balgo Hills, for Warlayirti Artists in 2004

Private Collection, acquired from the above

EXHIBITED

Manly Art Gallery and Museum, *Luminous: Contemporary Art From The Western Desert*, 17 June - 24 July 2005; additional venues: Bundoora Homestead Art Centre, 19 August - 2 October 2005; Latrobe Regional Gallery, 29 October - 4 December 2005; Flinders University Art Museum, 15 December 2005 - 12 February 2006; Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, 24 March - 7 May 2006; Manning Regional Art Gallery, 13 June - 25 July 2006; Grafton Regional Art Gallery, 16 August - 10 September 2006; Tamworth Regional Gallery, 11 November 2006 - 4 February 2007

The Australian Embassy, Paris, *Luminous. Chefs-d'œuvre du désert de la Collection Helen Read (Luminous: Desert Masterpieces from the Helen Read Collection)*, 10 October 2012 - 6 May 2013

$ 70,000 – 100,000

This painting is sold with its accompanying Warlayirti Artists documentation with descriptive notes that read:

"This painting tells part of the Wati Kutjarra story, a prominent Tjukurrpa (Dreaming) in the Tanami and Great Sandy Deserts. The Wati Kutjarra were two ancestral brothers who travelled large areas of the desert country teaching people about food, fire and hunting, they also created many of the landforms now found here. This painting's story takes place around Wilkinkarra (Lake MacKay), a vast salt lake located far to the south of Balgo. The two brothers travelled to the country of Wilkinkarra before the lake was formed, it was here they lit a large fire which burnt through all this country and created the lake. The two horizontal lines show where the Wati Kutjarra made camp and slept. The central section represents the windbreak they constructed to protect themselves from the wind and the many parallel lines are the tali (sandhills)."

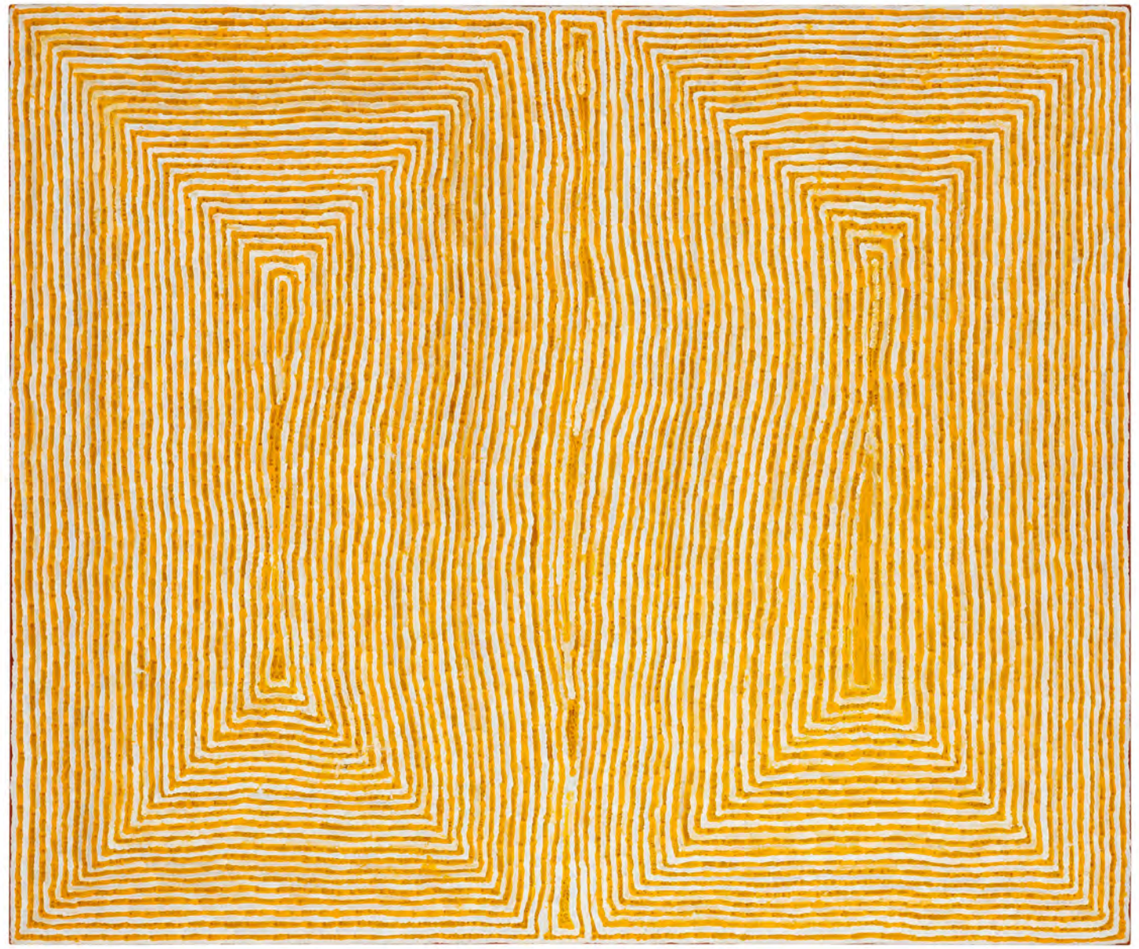
Tjumpo Tjapanangka was one of the doyens of the art movement at the community of Balgo in the Tanami Desert, on the southern perimeter of the eastern Kimberley. He played a fundamental role in the emergence of Balgo artists into the public domain, commencing in the 1980s. Tjapanangka was a gifted painter, an elder of the Kukatja people, a ceremonial leader, a hunter, a warrior and a maparn (traditional healer). He brought his prodigious ancestral knowledge and ritual authority to bear in his art, which he regarded as a means of bridging the social and cultural chasm between Aboriginal and kartiya (non-Aboriginal) societies. As the anthropologist Professor Fred Myers remarked in 1984, Tjapanangka was regarded by his peers and beyond as one of the eminent "cultural authorities of the Western Desert."[1]

In 2000, Tjumpo Tjapanangka, in the company of a number of Kukatja elders and senior artists including Lucy Yukenbarri (circa 1934 - 2003), Helicopter Tjungurrayi (born 1947) and Sam Willikati Tjampitjin (circa 1930 - 2003), made an epic journey from Balgo to Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay), where they were born and initiated, and where they spent the early years of their lives before contact with kartiya society.

The pilgrimage had a profound effect on Tjumpo Tjapanangka's art. Prior to the journey, his paintings tended to be relatively modest in scale and heavily laden with narrative and symbolic imagery. After the experience of visiting that country again, his paintings increased in scale, complex iconography gave way to fields of parallel lines and large geometric forms, and the emphasis in these paintings focuses on the supreme Kukatja creator beings, the Wati Kutjarra.

According to Tim Acker, the Warlayirti Artists Co-ordinator who accompanied the artists on the trip, "After the bush trip (for the Painting Country film), Tjumpo's work – always undertaken with such certainty, anchored as it was the arc of country north and west of the great salt lake, Wilkinkarra for which Tjumpo was responsible – found a whole new level of focus. His colour choice, the rigour with which he approached the canvas, the scale of his paintings, were stripped back to something elemental. The results were minimal, though epic. While Tjumpo's cheek and charisma were unchanged, his insistence on big canvases and his extraordinary work ethic hinted at urgency and conviction in the task of condensing the titanic work of the Wati Kutjarra and ensuring that his country would never be silent."[2]

In the 1980s, the artists at Balgo had gone to great lengths to integrate the new colors made available to them through the



introduction of acrylic paints into their traditional system of color theory and symbolism. Nonetheless, throughout his career Tjumpo preferred the four basic colours of the traditional palette – red and yellow ochres, pilytji and kantawarra respectively, white lililpa and black maru – in combinations that correspond to Kukatja aesthetics. In his later and larger paintings, Tjumpo used sequences of alternating colored stripes that refer directly to patterns painted onto people's bodies in ceremony, such as white and yellow in mourning ceremonies as in Wati Kutjarra, 2004.

Wally Caruana

Wally Caruana is an independent curator and consultant specialising in Australian Aboriginal art, and director of Caruana Fine Art. From 1984 to 2001 Caruana was the curator of the Aboriginal art collection at the National Gallery of Australia.

1. Fred Myers, "Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri: Powerful Presence in Person and in Paint", in Henry F. Skerritt, et al., *No Boundaries: Australian Aboriginal Contemporary Abstract Painting*, Munich, London, New York, 2014, p. 135.

2. Personal communication, 2018

ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022 Sotheby's

LOT 76

YANIMA TOMMY WATSON

Circa 1935 - 2017

Untitled, 2004

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
46 ¼ in by 44 in (117.5 by 111.5 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted for Irrunytju Art Centre, Western Australia (cat. no. IRRTW04629)

Private Collection, acquired from the above

EXHIBITED

Stock Show: Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney, November 2004. Cat 2.

$ 8,000 – 12,000



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Sotheby's EST. 1744



PROPERTY FROM THE THOMAS VROOM COLLECTION

LOT 77

MAWUKURA (MULGRA) JIMMY NERRIMAH

Circa 1924 - 2013

Nyimpi, 2004

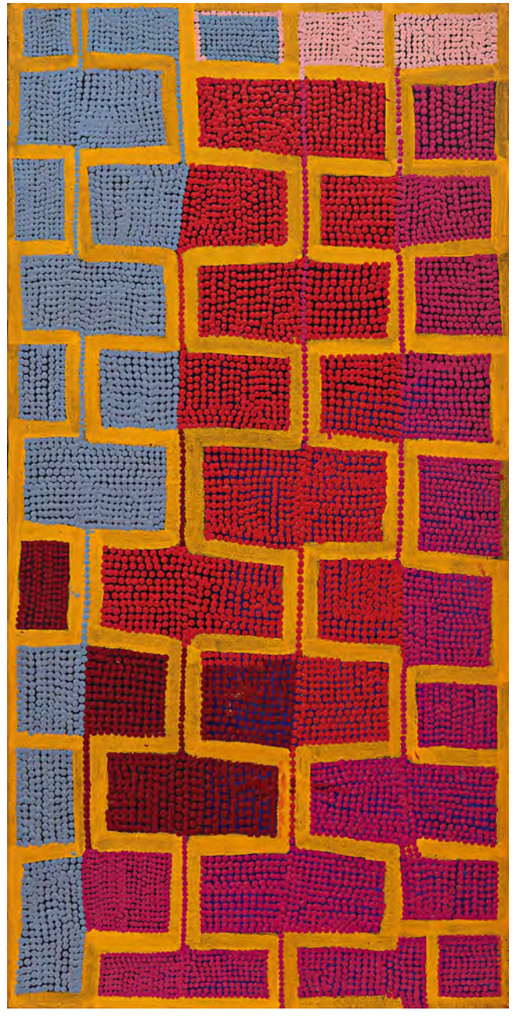
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
Bears Mangkatja Arts catalogue number PC 440/04 on the reverse;
55 in by 39 ¾in (140 by 101 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Fitzroy Crossing for Mangkatja Arts, Western Australia

The Thomas Vroom Collection, The Netherlands, acquired from the above

$ 5,000 – 8,000



PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF DAVID LARWILL

LOT 78

BOXER MILNER TJAMPITJIN

Circa 1934 - 2008

Purkitji, 2004

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
Bears artist's name, dimensions and Warlayirti Artists catalogue number 27/04, together with Gallery Gondwana stamp and catalogue number 8645BM on the reverse;
39 ⅜ in by 19 ¾ in (100 cm by 50 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted in early 2004 at Billaluna, Western Australia, for Warlayirti Artists, Balgo Hills

Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs

David Larwill, Melbourn

$ 5,000 – 8,000

LOT 79

CHRISTIAN THOMPSON

Born 1978

Gates of Tambo - Andy Warhol, 2004

C-type photograph, edition 10;
48 ¾ in by 49 ¼ in (124 by 125 cm);

PROVENANCE

Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne

Pool Party Art Auction, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 3 November 2005, lot 33, donated by Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne

Private Collection, Sydney

LITERATURE

D. Jackson, "The inside eye", *RealTime Arts: Australia's Critical Guide to International, Contemporary Arts*, No. 66, April-May 2005 (another example from the edition)

D. Clarke and S. Jenkins, *Culture Warriors: Australian Indigenous Art Triennial*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2007, p. 163 (another example from the edition)

Christine Wallace, "After Andy – Pop art Down Under", *The Canberra Times*, 27 October 2007 (another example from the edition)

Deborah Hart, *Andy and Oz: Parallel Visions*, Canberra, 2007, front cover and p. 16 (another example from the edition)

Ian McLean, *Rattling Spears: A History of Indigenous Australian Art*, London, 2016, pp. 244-245 (another example from the edition)

EXHIBITED

Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, *The Gates of Tambo*, 19 November - 13 November 2004

Spacement, Melbourne, *Self Made Man*, 1 - 26 February 2005

Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, *Andy and Friends*, 18 April - 6 May 2006 (another example from the edition)

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, *Culture Warriors: Australian Indigenous Art Triennial*, 13 October 2007 – 10 February 2008, then touring nationally (another example from the edition)

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, *Andy and Oz: Parallel Visions*, 20 October - 30 December 2007 (another example from the edition)

$ 10,000 – 15,000

Another example of this print is held in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

This C-Type photographic print is sold with the original Gabrielle Pizzi documentation relating to the exhibition, *The Gates of Tambo*, together with a copy of the National Gallery of Australia exhibition catalogue *Andy and Oz: Parallel Visions*, and a copy of the Art Gallery of New South Wales *Pool Party Art Auction* catalogue.

Dr Deborah Hart, Head Curator, Australian Art, National Gallery of Australia, has written with regard to this work, "Part of the liberation for Thompson in his encounters with Warhol's work has been his diverse identities. Andy is the child of European migrants. I identify with him as an outsider or fringe dweller. I'm not sure why but characters like Francis Bacon, Quentin Crisp, Boy George and of course Andy Warhol have always appealed to me. Perhaps it is their larger than life exterior or their ambiguity? Their inbetweeness? The collision of their seemingly disparate senses of self.[1]

Like Warhol, Thompson has long enjoyed the idea of dressing up as a means of altering identity. He identifies with the spirit of experimentation and inventiveness in Warhol's work, including his multiple representations of himself. Warhol was deeply interested in ways of imaging the self, changing his name from Warhola to Warhol. In the 1950s he began to effect a physical transformation. He started to lose his hair during his early twenties and wore a small hairpiece to hide the fact. In photographic contact sheets of self-portraits in The Andy Warhol Museum, he is shown "doubling his efforts to hide and transform himself - once by wearing whiteface makeup and by posing near one of his hand-painted folding screens, whose purpose was to create privacy."[2] The personal wigs that Warhol wore from the mid-1960s were shades of blond veering to white that made him instantly recognisable.

It is this "look" that Christian Thompson adopts in his portrait *Gates of Tambo - Andy Warhol*. The long, pale hair falling across his face leaves us in little doubt of the subject of his impersonation, despite the concealment of his face. At the same time, the spout of water that he blows from his mouth adds a sense of absurd humour, echoing Bruce Nauman's Self Portrait as a Fountain, 1967. Thompson's reasons for depicting himself as Warhol are in part because of the ongoing relevance



Warhol has to contemporary culture, predating our obsessions with reality television. Thompson also points out that Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists from Australia travel widely, live in different places and take their "selves", their cultural, social and artistic backgrounds, with them in an ongoing process of engagement with fresh ideas and alternative ways of looking at the world.

As he says: 'Andy and Bruce [Nauman] are absolutely creative forefathers. I have never thought of my work or my position in Australia as being 'not' international but in fact the opposite, I feel international as much in regional Queensland as I do in Amsterdam or New York. What is pure is the energy that perpetuates the simple gestures which are most central to our existence.'[3]"

1. Correspondence from Christian Thompson to Deborah Hart, 3 September 2007

2. The Staff of the Andy Warhol Museum, *Andy Warhol 365 Takes: The Andy Warhol Museum Collection*, Pittsburgh, 2004, p. 74

3. Correspondence from Christian Thompson to Deborah Hart, 3 September 2007, in Deborah Hart, *Andy and Oz: Parallel Visions*, Canberra, 2007, p. 17

ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022 Sotheby's

PRIVATE COLLECTION, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

LOT 80

JOSEPH JURRA TJAPALTJARRI

Circa 1952 - 2022

Yunala, 2006

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
Bears artist's name and Pupanya Tula Artists cat no. JJ0601094 on the reverse;
72 in by 60 ¼ in (183 by 153 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Kintore for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs

Private Collection, Perth

$ 40,000 – 60,000

This painting is accompanied by its Pupanya Tula Artists Certificate of Authenticity.

Joseph Jurra Tjapaltjarri was born in the desert interior of Western Australia in 1952. At the time his family lived in country west of where the Kiwirrkurra community now stands, with only intermittent contact with the increasing number of kartiya (non-Indigenous people) who were beginning to circulate in the region.

Over a decade later, Jurra and his extended family group encountered a Northern Territory Welfare Branch patrol and were brought into the Government settlement of Papunya, 250 miles east. Here, in the company of relatives they'd not seen for many years, they were required to adapt to the sedentary lifestyle of community life.

In 1971, Jurra witnessed several of the settlements Aboriginal men painting their ancestral stories onto scraps of composition board to be sold in the nearby township of Alice Springs.

This was the beginning of the of the Western Desert Art movement, a moment in time now etched into Australian art history. However it wasn't until the early 1980's that Jurra was called upon to assist one of his classificatory fathers, Charlie Tjaruru Tjungurrayi with his paintings. A few years later when Jurra began painting as a solo artist he created formal geometric compositions of dotted lines, concentric circles and squares. Within two years he presented his first solo exhibition at the revered Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi in Melbourne, the same year he exhibited in a group show at the John Weber Gallery, New York.

Over time his began to use heavily dotted sinuous lines to illustrate various desert flora¬. Yunala, 2006 represents the root system of yunala (Bush banana or silky pear vine, Marsdenia australis). Yunala is also the name of a rockhole site where a group of ancestral women gathered to collect this yunala prior to continuing their journey north-east to Wilkinkarra (Lake MacKay). Jurra lived at the remote settlement of Kiwirrkurra in Western Australia where he was recognized as an affable gentleman, equal parts boyish joker and solemn recluse.

Luke Scholes

Luke Scholes is former curator of Aboriginal art at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. He has curated multiple award-winning exhibitions and written extensively about Aboriginal art.



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LOT 81

WALANGKURA NAPANANGKA

Circa 1946 - 2014

Tjinttjintjin, 2006

Synthetic polymer paint on Belgian linen;
Bears Papunya Tula catalogue number WN060873 on the reverse;
72 in by 96 in (183 by 244 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Kintore, Northern Territory in 2006

Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs (cat. no. WN060873)

Private Collection, acquired from the above

EXHIBITED

Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, *Pintupi*, 2006

$ 50,000 – 80,000

Exhibited at the much-heralded annual exhibition of Pintupi art, at Papunya Tula Artists in Alice Springs in 2007, Tjinttjintjin, 2006, is the pinnacle of Walangura Napanangka's celebrated oeuvre. Completed during her critical mid-career period, it is a work of dramatic scale and composition. The tremulous roundels, sweeping lines and grid-like patterns are meticulously finished in Walangkura's striking palette of red, yellow, and cream.

A reticent member of the boisterous women's painting group at Walungurru (Kintore), Walangkura was known to retreat to a quiet corner of their shared studio and dedicate her energies to her painting practice. Each of her large, seemingly abstract landscape paintings depicted the geographical features in the area through which the ancestral being Kutungka Napanangka travelled. As an old woman Kutungka travelled alone, encountering other ancestral beings and humans, her actions forming the desert landscape through which she travelled.

Tjintjintjin, 2006 depicts the rockhole and cave site of Tjintjintjin, just to the west of the Walungurru where Kutungka stopped on her travels. At the site of Malparingya, north-west of Tjintjintjin, Kutungka dug an enormous hole in search of an ancestral kuniya (snake) that lived underground. Eventually unearthing it, she killed it, cooked it in her fire and ate it before continuing her travels east to Muruntji, south-west of Mt Liebig. At Muruntji Kutungka was accosted by a young boy, only to discover that he was one of a group of young boys at this site. She immediately gave chase, eventually ensnaring all but the culprit who managed to escape. To avenge the boy's taunts, she killed the group of boys and cooked them in a large fire. She continued her travels east and then entered the earth at the site of Kaltarra.

Luke Scholes

Luke Scholes is former curator of Aboriginal art at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. He has curated multiple award-winning exhibitions and written extensively about Aboriginal art.



ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022 Sotheby's

PRIVATE COLLECTOR, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

LOT 82

PATRICK TJUNGURRAYI

Circa 1943 - 2017

Myilili, 2006

Synthetic polymer paint on Belgian linen;
Bears Papunya Tula catalogue number PT 0610083 on the reverse;
59 3/4 in by 72 in (152 by 183 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Kiwirrkura, Western Australia for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs (cat. no. PT 0610083)

Cross Cultural Exchange, Darwin

Private Collection, acquired from the above

EXHIBITED

Cross Cultural Art Exchange, Darwin, *Papunya Tula Artists: Recent Paintings*, 12 - 23 August 2007

$ 50,000 – 70,000

This painting is sold with accompanying Papunya Tula Artist's documentation with descriptive notes that read: "This painting depicts designs associated with the site of Myilili, near Jupiter Well and west of the Kiwirrkura community in Western Australia. In ancestral times a large group of ancestral Tingari Men camped at this site before travelling south east to Ngarru. At Ngarru the men performed the dances and sang the songs associated with the area. Upon completion of the ceremonies at Ngarru the men continued their travels north east toward Kiwirrkura, eventually reaching Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay) via another lake site known as Pinari.

As the men travelled they drank from various water sources found amongst the rocky outcrops. These rockholes and soakages are represented by the concentric squares running through the middle of the painting. The jagged lines represent rain making designs that were painted onto the men's bodies for ceremonial purposes. Since events associated with the Tingari Cycle are of a secret nature no further detail was given.

Generally, the Tingari are a group of ancestral beings of the Dreaming who travelled over vast stretches of the country, performing rituals and creating and shaping particular sites. The Tingari men were usually followed by Tingari women and were accompanied by novices, and their travels and adventures are enshrined in a number of song cycles. These ancestral stories form part of the teachings of the post initiatory youths today as well providing explanations for contemporary customs."



ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022 Sotheby's

PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF DAVID LARWILL

LOT 83

RONNIE TJAMPITJINPA

Born circa 1943

Water Dreaming at Malparingya, 2006

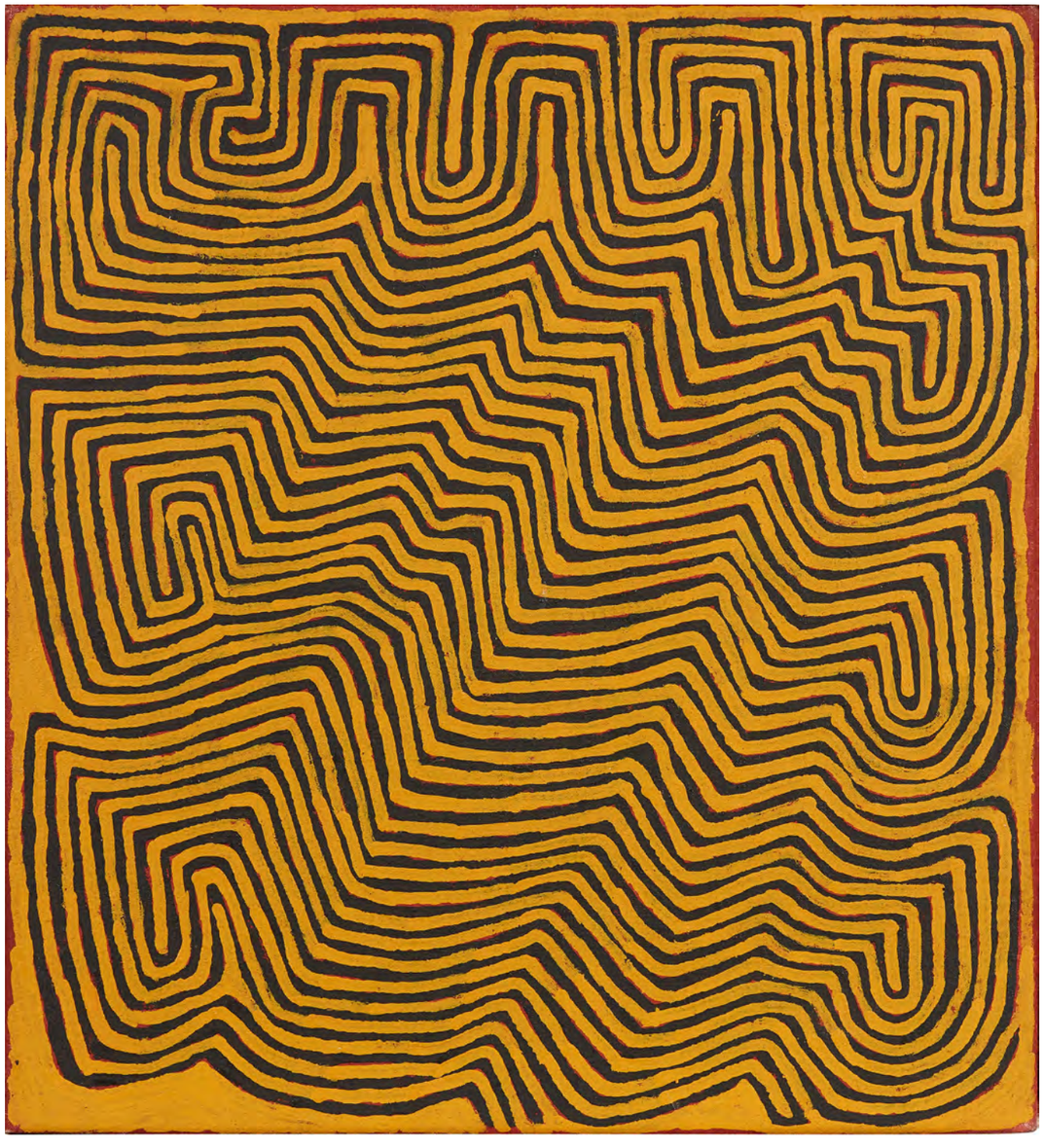
Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
Bears the artist's name, dimensions and Papunya Tula Artists catalogue number RT0607145 on reverse;
24 in by 25 ⅝ in (61 cm by 55 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Kintore in 2006 for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, Northern Territory

David Larwill, Melbourne, acquired from the above

$ 3,000 – 5,000



ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022 Sotheby's

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

LOT 84

JOHN MAWURNDJUL

Born circa 1952

Lorrkon, 2006

Natural earth pigments and synthetic binders on carved hardwood;
57 ¼ in (145.4 cm);

PROVENANCE

Executed in 2006 in Western Arnhem Land for Maningrida Arts and Craft (cat. no. 4084-06)

Raft Art Space, Parap, Northern Territory

American Private Collection, acquired from the above

EXHIBITED

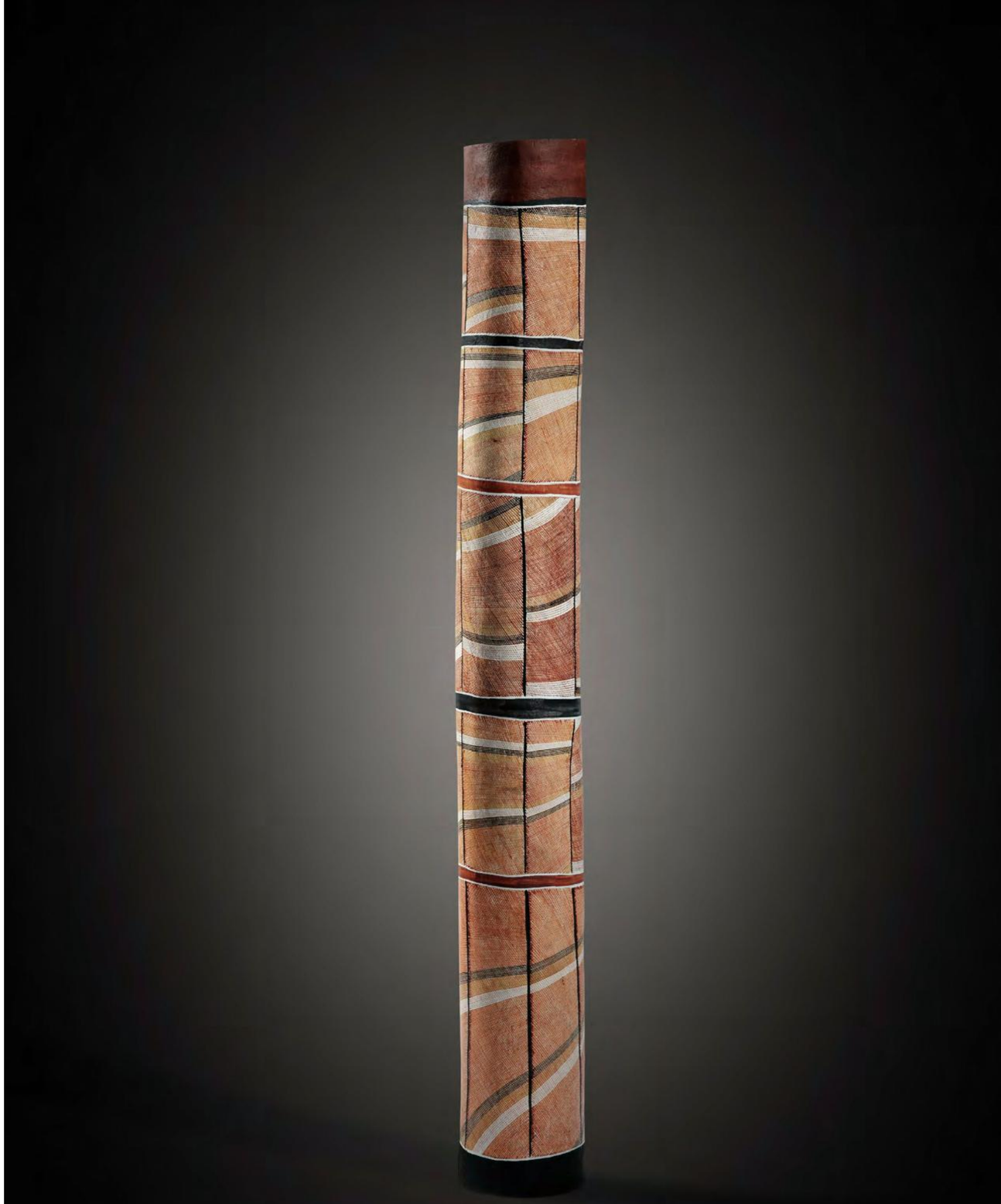
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 2012 - December 2020

$ 18,000 – 25,000

For a series of related Lorrkons by the artist included in his recent retrospective see, Clotilde Bullen, *John Mawurndjul: I am the Old and theNew*, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney, 2018, pp. 290-305.

In the catalogue for his recent retrospective John Mawurndjul writes about the traditional use of Lorrkkon's by his people, 'We used to cut the hollow logs and take them into the ceremony, down to the camp. After a person dies, I would wait two years. We don't bury them in the ground; it is too difficult to extract the body. Two years time means, okay get the shovel, time to stand up the lorrkkon. We tell everyone, 'Let's go to the Lorrkkon ceremony. Let's cut a hollow log'. Then someone cuts one and we wait a few days for it to dry out and become light. Once it is light, it can be carried down and then we start preparing the surface with a wood rasp, and the bones of the deceased are prepared. In the Lorrkkon ceremony early in the morning, at dawn, that's when we put the bones into the hollow log. We place the bones inside until they have filled it up and we knock them down, moving them into the hollow log. But they don't fall out the other end, as we have blocked the bottom of the log. At the end of the ceremony, early in the morning, as the sun moves across the sky, the hollow log is placed upright. It will stand there and decay. At the end of the standing-up ritual the women will dance around it.

In the camp, people chant as they move up. The section with men carrying burning torches represents the fire hawks who carry burning embers and take them away, dropping them to continue the fire. Fire hawks, or brown falcons, carry the fire in the ceremony, representing the hawk lifting up that person and taking them away. I have seen hawks carrying fire. During a bushfire, they dive down at speed and take burning ember in their claws-'snap', they grab it. They take the fire away and drop it somewhere else' (*ibid.*, p. 283).



PRIVATE COLLECTION, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

LOT 85

BILL WHISKEY TJAPALTJARRI

Circa 1920 - 2008

Rock Holes and Country Near the Olgas, 2007

Acrylic on Belgian linen;
59 in by 90 ½ in (150 by 90 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Mt Leibig for Watiyawanu Artists of Amunturrungu (cat. no. 3-07244)

John Gordon Gallery, Coff's Harbour

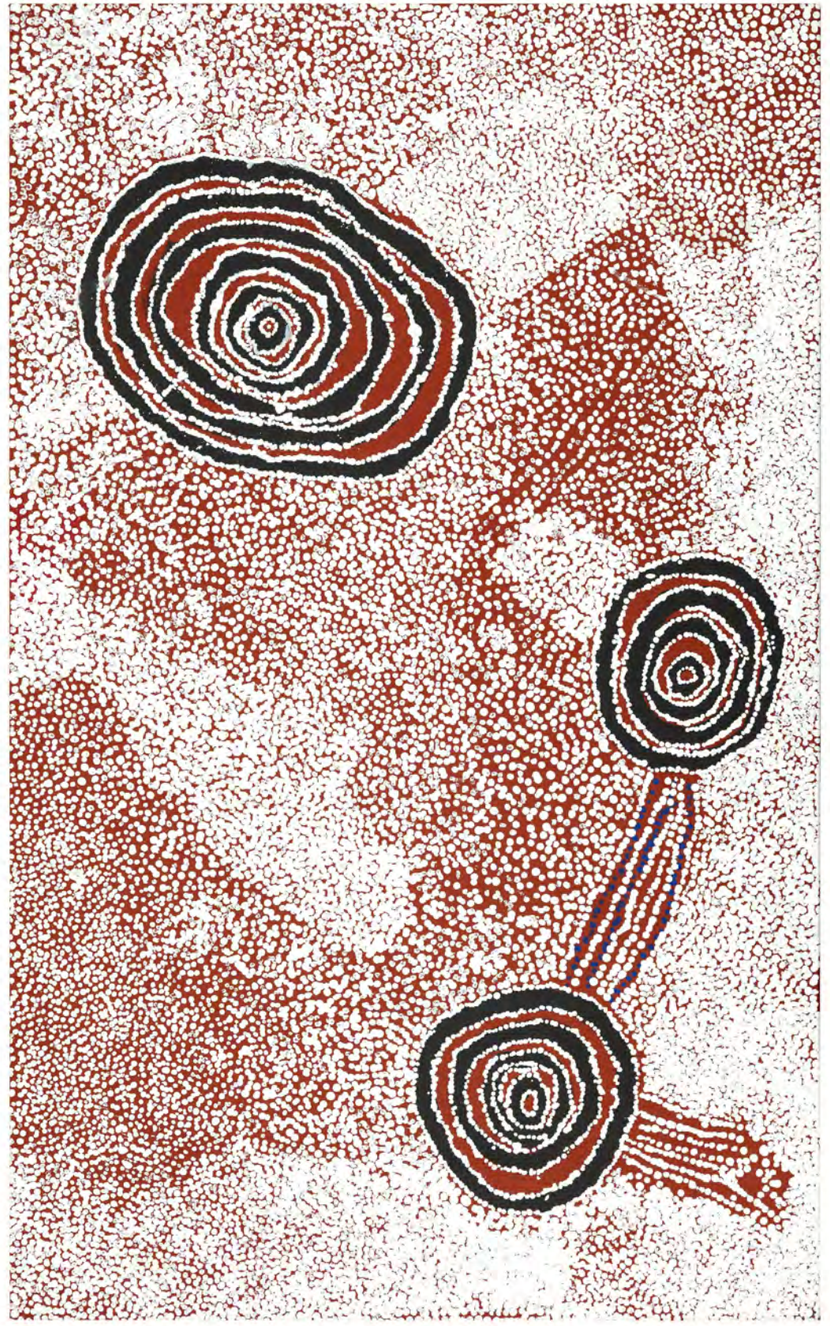
Private Collection, Perth, acquired from the above

EXHIBITED

Displayed in the residence of the Australian Ambassador to the United States of America, Washington, D.C., 2010 - 2016

$ 20,000 – 30,000

This painting is accompanied by a Watiyawanu Artists Certificate of Authenticity.



LOT 86

WINTJIYA NAPALTJARRI

Circa 1932 - 2014

Women's Ceremonies at Watanuma, 2007

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
Bears the artist's name, dimensions and Papunya Tula Artists catalogue number WN0712103 on reverse;
59 7/8 in by 71 7/8 in (153 by 183 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted in 2007 at Kintore for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs

Private Collection

LITERATURE

Henry F. Skerritt, ed., *Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection,* Reno and Munich, 2016, pp. 56-57

EXHIBITED

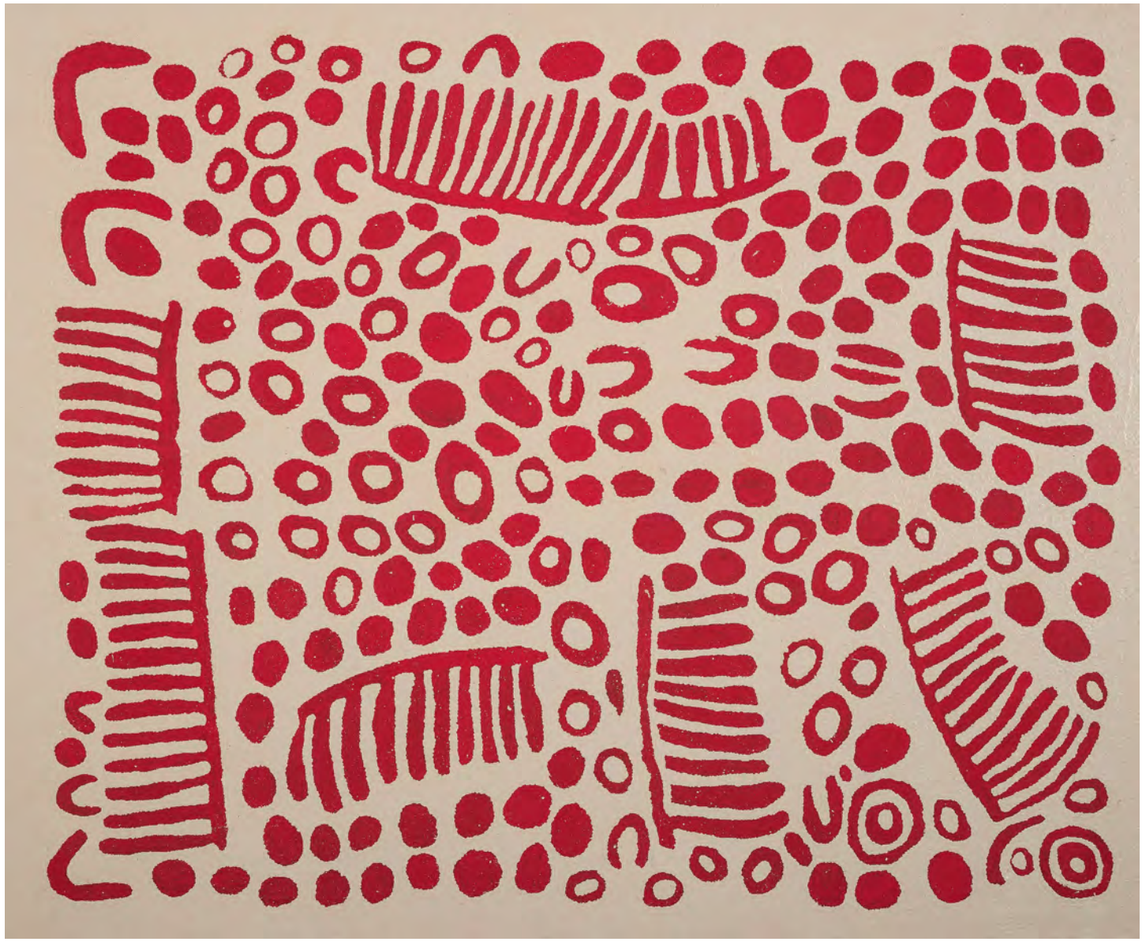
Newcomb Art Museum, Tulane University, New Orleans, *Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection*, 7 September 2016 - 1 January 2017; additional venues: Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida International University, Miami, 28 January - 7 May 2017; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, 23 September 2017 - 21 January 2018; Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 17 February - 13 May 2018; The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., 2 June - 9 September 2018; Museum of Anthropology, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1 November 2018 - 24 February 2019

$ 12,000 – 18,000

Wintjiya Napaltjarri was born in the early 1930s near the swamp at Malparingya, northwest of Walungurru, in the Northern Territory of Australia. In her twenties she joined the migration of Western Desert Pintupi people to the Lutheran mission at Haast's Bluff. The local pastor encouraged Napaltjarri to paint and, after a sporadic artistic journey, she began to paint regularly in a collaborative practice with a small group of women for Papunya Tula Artists in 1995. Solo practice ensued; she painted her deep connection to her mother's dreaming, as it was passed on to her.

This canvas' bold iconography depicts Watanuma, an ancient soakage site close to Kintore in the Northern Territory. The ancestral *Minyma Kutjarra* (Two Women) journeyed to this place and, in their travels, imbued the surrounding natural environment with meaning. Through the ceremonies and rituals relating to the spiritual legacy of *Minyma Kutjarra*, Pintupi women share knowledge of menstruation, womanhood, courtship, love, pregnancy, and childbirth. Napaltjarri's monochromatic palette depicts these ceremonies; the slashes represent nulla-nullas, or digging sticks, and the floating, comb-like shapes represent *nyimparra* (hair-string skirts).

"The props of ceremony dancing sticks and hair string are depicted by elongated bars and drawn-out loops. In ceremonial dances such objects were used to embody the women's travel and progression through life; at times symbolizing the umbilical cord or used to imitate the action of piercing a woman's nasal septum as she transitions to womanhood." (Henry F. Skerritt, ed., *Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection*, Reno and Munich, 2016, p. 56).



PRIVATE COLLECTION, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

LOT 87

IVAN SHEPHERD

Born circa 1944

Wati Kutjarra, 2008

Acrylic on canvas;
84 in by 40 in (213.4 by 101.6 cm);

PROVENANCE

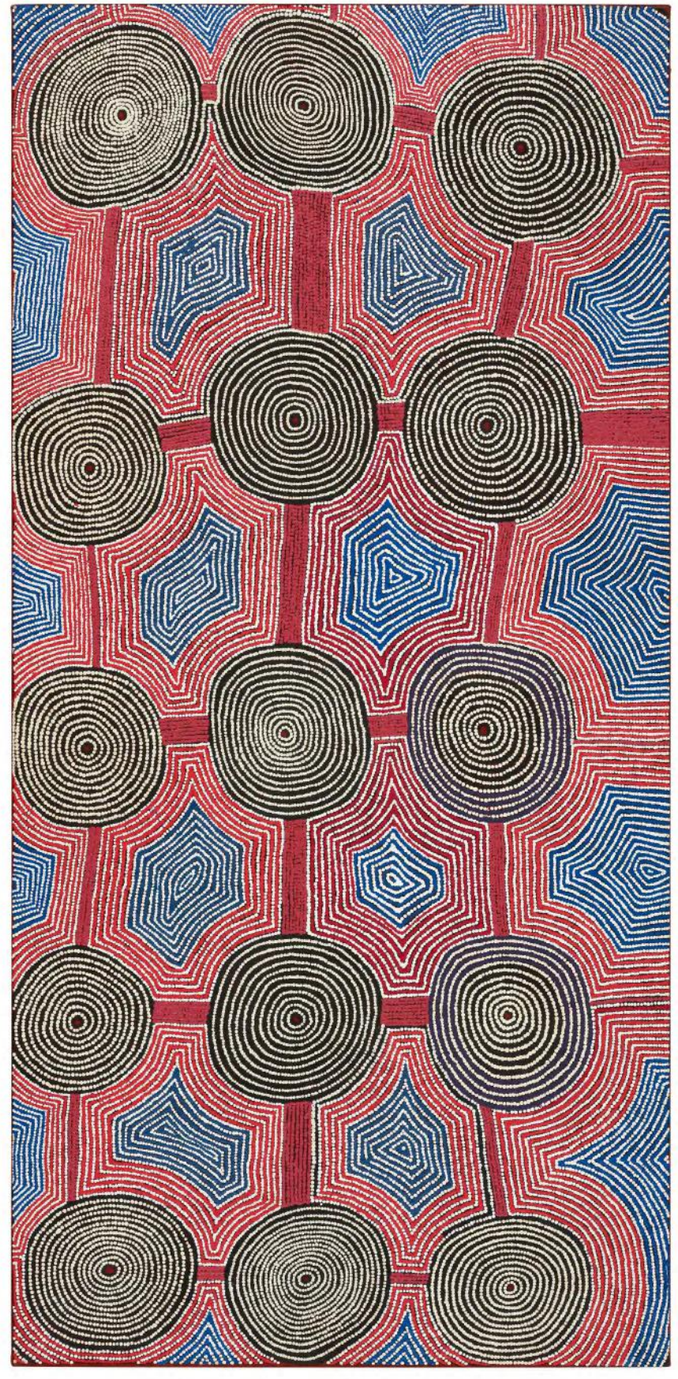
Painted at Warakurna for Warakurna Artists (cat. no. 332-08)

Marshall Arts, Adelaide

Private Collection, Perth, acquired from the above

$ 10,000 – 15,000

This painting is sold with an accompanying Warakurna Artists Certificate of Authenticity.



LOT 88

RICHARD BELL

Born 1953

View from the MCA

Circa 2008;
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
84 in by 40 in (213.4 by 101.6 cm);

PROVENANCE

Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Private Collection, acquired from the above

LITERATURE

Clothilde Bullen et al., *Richard Bell: You Can Go Now*, Sydney, 2021, p. 88

EXHIBITED

Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney, *Richard Bell: You Can Go Now*, 4 June – 29 August 2021

$ 15,000 – 20,000

Richard Bell works across a variety of media including painting, installation, performance and video. One of Australia's most significant artists, Bell's work explores the complex artistic and political problems of Western, colonial and Indigenous art production. He grew out of a generation of Aboriginal activists and has remained committed to the politics of Aboriginal emancipation and self-determination. In 2003 he was the recipient of the Telstra National Aboriginal Art Award, establishing him as an important Australian artistic figure. Bell is represented in most major National and State collections, and has exhibited in a number of solo exhibitions at important institutions in Australia and overseas.

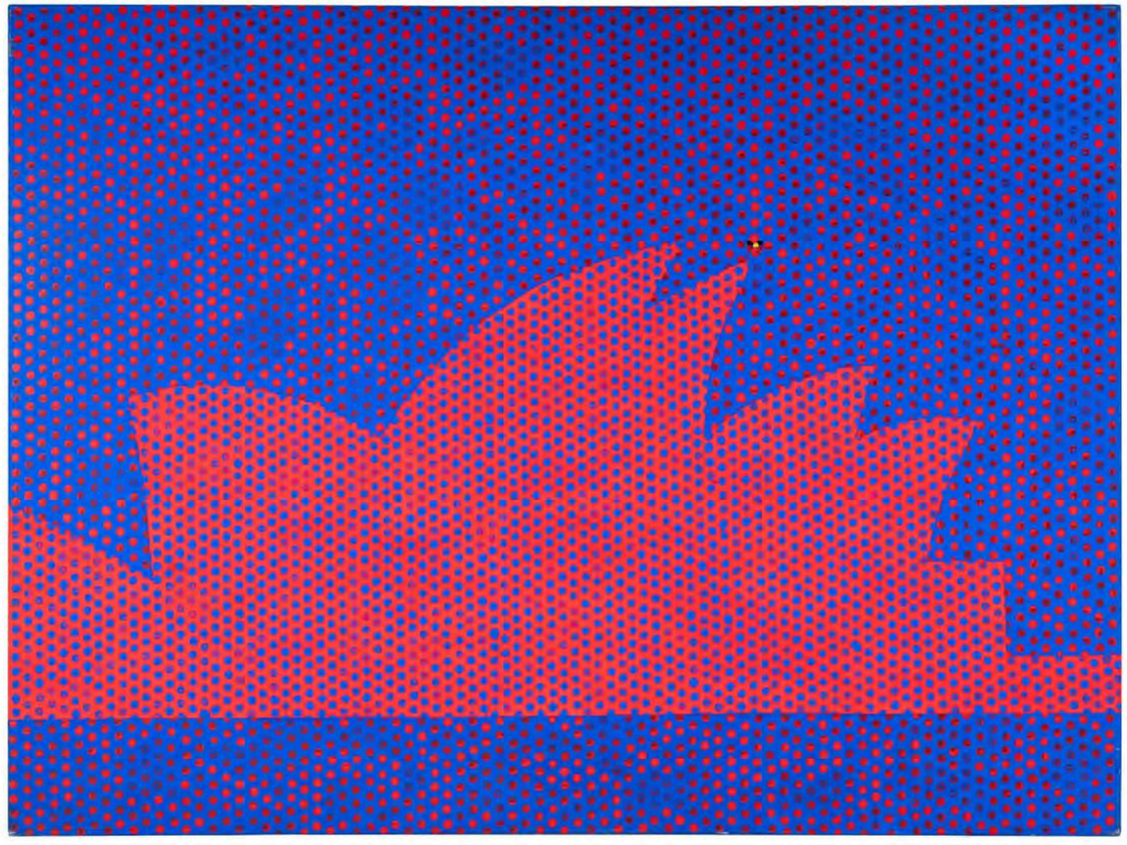
Bell's painting *View from the MCA* (2008) depicts the Sydney Opera House, an iconic and enduring image of Australian national identity. Such icons are instantly recognisable, even as a subtracted silhouette. But Bell reminds us of what is less visible in the picture now, what happened on this site centuries before, before the Opera House or the Museum of Contemporary Art where established. When the First Fleet landed in 1788, port Jackson was picked as the site for a British settlement, symbolising the advent of colonialism in Australia. *View from the MCA* is taken from the position of the First Fleet's landing in 1788, where the Museum of Contemporary Art now stands. Rendered in a mechanical 'dot' technique that references both pop aesthetics and western desert painting, and with an aboriginal flag pitched atop the Opera House, the work postulates the reclamation of Bennelong point, an ancient sacred site for the Eora nation.

Bell is not afraid to pull back the curtain on Australia, to "speak truth to power".[1] He reminds us of what lies beneath our most ubiquitous images, in this work painting with the gestures of pop art that he explored in the 2000s, as befits the Opera House's notoriety. Bell's invocation of the languages of modernism "subverts the colonial aesthetic paradigm", calling into question how what we take for granted as 'authentic' and 'original' in Western art is often stolen from someone else.[2] There is no pardon for the art world from Bell, who instead implicates museums and galleries in their frequent roles as ancillary sites of colonisation.

In 2021, The Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney, staged a retrospective exhibition of Bell's work. *View from the MCA* featured prominently in the exhibition and is reproduced in the catalogue. 2022 sees Bell undertaking some of his most ambitious projects to date, with work exhibited at documenta 15, and solo projects at the Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Italy, and the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands. In mid-2023, Bell will unveil a major solo project at the Tate Modern, London.

1. Maura Reilly, "Speaking Truth to Power," in *Richard Bell: You Can Go Now* (Sydney: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2021, 33, exhibition catalogue.

2. Daniel Browning, "Decolonising Now: The Activism of *Richard Bell," in Richard Bell: Lessons on Etiquette and Manners* (Melbourne: Monash University Museum of Art, 2013), p. 24.



ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022 Sotheby's

PROPERTY FROM THE STEVE MARTIN AND ANNE STRINGFIELD COLLECTION, NEW YORK

LOT 89

RONNIE TJAMPITJINPA

Born circa 1943

Ngarru, 2008

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
Bears Papunya Tula Artists cat. no. RT0802152 on the verso;
72 in by 96 in (183 by 244 cm);

PROVENANCE

Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs

Private Collection, Melbourne

D'Lan Contemporary, Melbourne

The Steve Martin and Anne Stringfield Collection, New York

EXHIBITED

Gagosian, New York, *Desert Painters of Australia: Works from the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia and the Collection of Steve Martin and Anne Stringfield*, May 3 - July 3 2019

$ 120,000 – 180,000

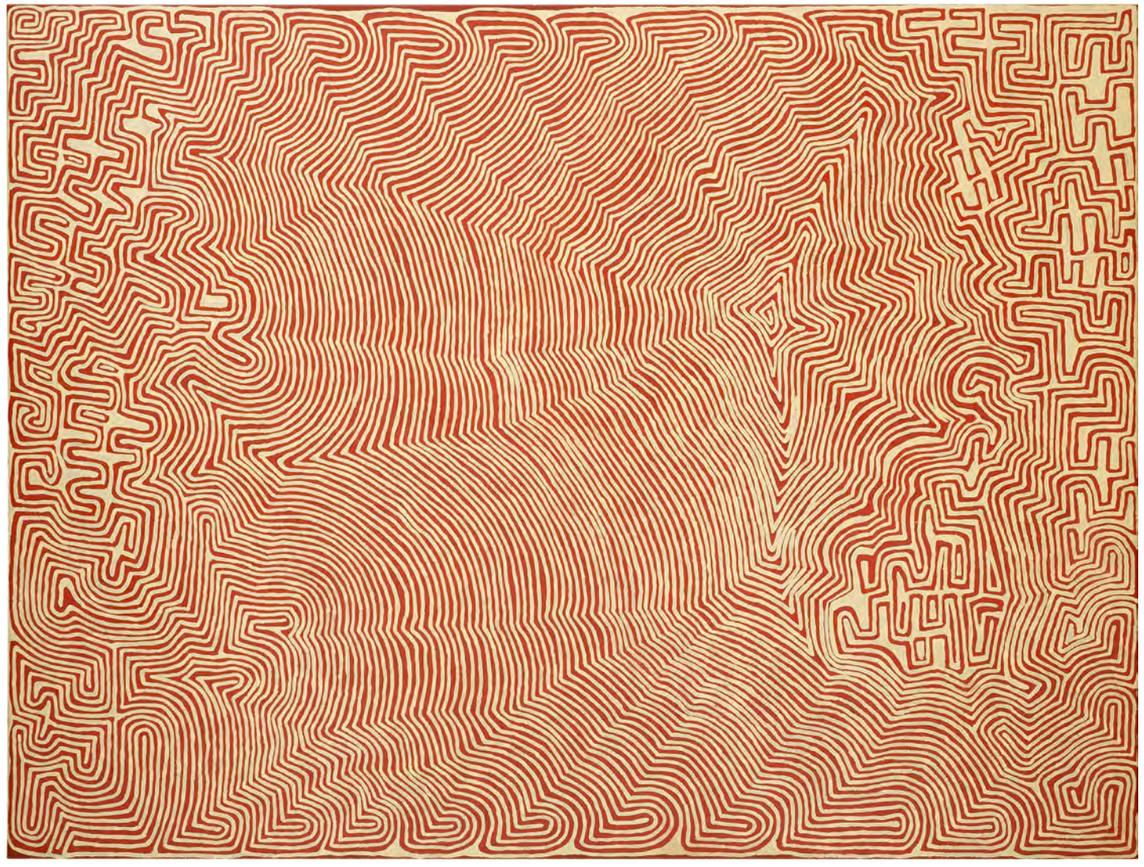
At not yet thirty years of age, Ronnie Tjampitjinpa was the youngest member of the first group of desert artists who translated their traditional graphic lexicon from ceremonial ground paintings and body decorations into acrylic paint on board, and later canvas, at the remote government settlement of Papunya in 1971. Surrounded by senior ritual leaders and artists, many of whom had only recently been in contact with non-Aboriginal people, Ronnie Tjampitjinpa and his cohorts revolutionised Aboriginal art, and in turn the history of art in Australia. Unto that moment, the public and academic perception of Aboriginal art focused on paintings and sculptures made from natural ochres and timbers, mainly from Arnhem Land and surrounding regions in the Northern Territory. The pictorial art of the desert was and continues to be made of ephemeral materials in ceremonial contexts, hence not seen by the public at large. Never before had ancestral designs been laid down in portable permanent media and made accessible to a wider public.

As his career developed, Ronnie Tjampitjinpa was one of the first painters to dispense with the graphic symbols of the desert visual language for intensely optical images consisting of parallel linear designs. Painted in February 2008, in the heat of the southern summer in the desert, Ngarru shimmers with the ancestral forces embedded in the earth. The work relates to an episode in the chronicles of the apical ancestors of the Pintupi and neighbouring desert groups, the Tingari who sculpted the landscape and gave people law and culture. In this instance, the ancestors lit a great bushfire at the site of Ngaru near Jupiter Well in the northwest of the Gibson Desert; people fled in two directions, to the east and to the southeast. While the painting is not a literal descriptive image, the composition suggests movement in two directions from a central hub.

Wally Caruana

Wally Caruana is an independent curator and consultant specialising in Australian Aboriginal art, and director of Caruana Fine Art. From 1984 to 2001 Caruana was the curator of the Aboriginal art collection at the National Gallery of Australia.

This painting is sold with the accompanying Papunya Tula Artists documentation and catalogue number RT 0802152.



ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022 Sotheby's

PRIVATE COLLECTION, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

LOT 90

MINYAWE JANGALA MILLER AND NYANJILPAYI NANCY CHAPMAN

Born circa 1932 and circa 1941

Nyartajujarra, 2008

Acrylic on linen;
49 ¼ in by 118 in (125 by 300 cm);

$ 15,000 – 25,000

PROVENANCE

Painted at the Punmu community, Western Australia for Martumili Artists (cat. no. 08-933)

Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney

Private Collection, Perth, acquired from the above on 19 May 2009

EXHIBITED

Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney, *Nintijunu: Teaching,* 14 May – 6 June 2009

Displayed in the residence of the Australian Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, Beijing, 2017 - 2020

This painting is sold with accompanying Martumili Arts documentation, that reads in part, "Nyartajujarra is Minyawes Country. His family walked around here in pujiman days (bush days). Narala is the name of the water here, lots of tali (sandhillks) are found here also."



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Sotheby's IST. 1744

PRIVATE COLLECTION, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

LOT 91

GINGER WIKILYIRI

Born circa 1932

Piltati, 2008

Acrylic on canvas;
62 ½ in by 78 in (159 by 198 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Nyapari for Tjungu Palya Art Centre, South Australia (cat. no. 08351)

Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Private Collection, Perth, acquired from the above

LITERATURE

Elizabeth Tregenza, ed., *Tjukurpa Pulkatjara: The Power of the Law. A Benchmark Selection of Works from the Artists from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjara Lands and the Ngaanyatjarra Lands*, Adelaide 2010, pp. 38-39

EXHIBITED

South Australian Museum, Adelaide, *Tjukurpa Pulkatjara: The Power of the Law*, March 2010

$ 20,000 – 30,000

This painting is sold with accomanying Tjungu Palya Arts documentation with descriptive notes that read in part, "Wati Kutjara Piltatinya Nyinanyi (two men were sitting at Piltiti). Kunga kutjarra (two women) were travelling from a long way. When those women got to Piltati they said "ngura wiru" (good place, good camp). Those women saw the apu (rocky outcrop) and saw the red walka (painting) inside kulpi (cave). They looked around some more and saw kapi kurungka unyanyutjara ngaripai (water lying in a creekbed with green algae on it) and decided they would stay at Piltati, ngura wiru (good place)."



PRIVATE COLLECTION, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

LOT 92

DOREEN REID NAKAMARRA

Circa 1955 - 2009

Marrapinti, 2009

Synthetic polymer paint on Belgian linen;
Bears Papunya Tula Artists catalogue number DR0901107 on the reverse;
35 ¾ in by 35 ¾ in (91 by 91 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Kintore Western Australia for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs

Private Collection, Perth, acquired from the above

$ 15,000 – 25,000

See Deborah Clark and Susan Jenkins eds, *Culture Warriors: Australian Indigenous Art Triennial*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2007, pp. 132-133, for discussion and illustration of related works by Nakamarra.

In the cited catalogue, Paul Sweeney, then long term Manager of Papunya Tula Artists writes, "Nakamarra is a quiet achiever who has been gradually honing her skills over the last decade. Currently she is leading a group of relatively young women painters from Kiwirrkurra who have continued to explore intricate line work and subtle colour shifts. Her combination of fine brushwork and precise technique has ensured that even her smallest works are highly detailed. On the larger formats, her current style of finely drawn zigzags combined with broken lines of alternate coloured dotting creates an optical effect in which the canvas appears to rise and fall like a series of meandering ridges and valleys. These are *tali*, or sandhills, which surround all the major women's sites at Kiwirrkurra that Doreen refers to in her work. Doreen has expanded on the theme and recently has introduced an even more subtle use of colour, using two or sometimes three slight tonal variations, and combining them with the complex, wavering line work that has become synonymous with her signature pieces.

Nakamarra's exhibition history peaked last year (2006) when she was represented in twelve shows, including *Right here/ right now* at the National Gallery of Australia, the Melbourne Art Fair and Pintupi at Hamiltons Gallery in London. Her paintings have an appeal that attracts the viewer from a purely contemporary perspective, and have succeeded in introducing new audiences to Western Desert art." (*ibid.*)

However, her star continued to rise way beyond this early peak. In 2007, her work was included in *Culture Warriors* at the National Gallery of Australia, which toured to the nation's major public institutions before travelling to the Katzen Arts Centre in Washington in 2009. In 2008, she was the recipient of the General Painting Award at the 25th National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards. And in 2009 she was selected for *The Third Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art*, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow, Russia, and exhibited at the *Nganana Tjungurrayi Tjukurrpa Nintintjakitja: We are Here Sharing our Dreaming*, East Galleries, New York, USA, where her large scale painting was acquired by the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University. Tragically after returning from the exhibition in New York the artist fell ill and died shortly after, at the peak of her career.

This painting is sold with accompanying Papunya Tula Artist's documentation that reads in part, "This painting depicts designs associated with the rockhole site of Marrapinti, west of the Pollack Hills in Western Australia. The lines in the painting depict the creek at the site and the sandhills that surround it. In ancestral times a group of women of the Nangala and Napangati kinship sub sections camped at this site during their travels towards the east. While at the site the women made nose bones, also known as marrapinti, which are worn through a hole made in the nose web. During ceremonies relating to marrapinti the older women pierced the nasal septums of the younger women who were participating in ceremony. Nose bones were used by both men and women but are now only inserted by the older generation on ceremonial occasions."



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LOT 93

WINTJIYA NAPALTJARRI

Circa 1932 - 2014

Women's Ceremonies at Watanuma, 2009

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
Bears the artist's name, dimensions and Papunya Tula Artists catalogue number WN0901052 on reverse;
48 in by 60 ¼ in (122 by 153 cm);

$ 8,000 – 12,000

PROVENANCE

Painted in 2009 at Kintore for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs

Private Collection

LITERATURE

Henry F. Skerritt, ed., *Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection*, Reno and Munich, 2016, pp. 58-59

EXHIBITED

Newcomb Art Museum, Tulane University, New Orleans, *Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection*, 7 September 2016 - 1 January 2017; additional venues: Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida International University, Miami, 28 January - 7 May 2017; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, 23 September 2017 - 21 January 2018; Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 17 February - 13 May 2018; The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., 2 June - 9 September 2018; Museum of Anthropology, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1 November 2018 - 24 February 2019



ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022

Sotheby's 1744

PRIVATE COLLECTION, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

LOT 94

SALLY(MIRDIDINGKINGATHI JUWARNDA) GABORI

Circa 1924 - 2015

My Country, 2009

Synthetic polymer paint on linen;
78 in by 39 ¾ in (198 by 101 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted on Bentinck Island, Queensland for Mornington Island Arts (cat. no. 4573-L-SG-0809)

Raft Artspace, Darwin

Private Collection, Perth, acquired from the above on 13 August 2009

EXHIBITED

Raft Artspace, Darwin, *Sally Gabori,* 13 August - 5 September 2009

$ 20,000 – 30,000

Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori, from Bentinck Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria, was one of the last coastal Aboriginal people to be born beyond the Australian frontier. Her early life was lived entirely traditionally. From the time of her birth in around 1924 she lived on Bentinck Island where she worked with the sea to provide sustenance for her family. In 1948, however, after consecutive natural disasters on Bentinck Island – including a drought and storms, and a tidal surge that ruined the island's fresh water supply – she moved with her Kaiadilt family to Mornington Island.

It was on Mornington Island in 2005, nearly 60 years after being separated from her country, that Gabori first picked up a paintbrush. Her Kaiadilt family had no prior experience of making art and so her early attempts at painting allowed her a freedom to express her story in an entirely new way. Her artistic repertoire mainly consisted of six subjects, all of them places on Bentinck Island to which she had strong personal and familial ties: Mirdidingki, Dibirdibi, Dingkari, Makarrki, Thundi and Nyinyilki. She painted each place hundreds of times to relive memories of the people and places she loved.

Although Gabori's paintings of her homeland are abstract, elements of their composition speak to the textures of her homeland. Her paintings of Makarrki often relate to the flow of the river, the topography of the islands within the river, the tidal sand flats and offshore sand bars, camping and dugong-hunting areas, the rippled sand at the river mouth, fringes of stilted mangroves and rock-walled fish traps.

This painting is sold with accompanying Certificate of Authenticity provided by Mornington Island Arts.



ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022 Sotheby's

PRIVATE COLLECTION, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

LOT 95

JOHNNY YUNGUT TJUPURRULA

Born circa 1930

Tjangimanta, 2010

Synthetic polymer paint on Belgian linen;
60 ¼ in by 48 in (153 by 122 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Kiwirrkurra, Western Australia, for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs (cat. no. JY 1008075)

Paul Johnstone Gallery, Darwin

Private Collection, acquired from the above

$ 25,000 – 35,000

This painting is sold with accompanying Papunya Tula Artist's documentation.



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LOT 96

NYAPANYAPA YUNUPINGU

Circa 1945 - 2021

White Painting, 2010

Earth pigments on bark;
52 in by 35 ⅜ in (132 by 90 cm);

PROVENANCE

Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Art Centre, Yirrkala, Northern Territory, catalogue number 3589M

Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Paddington, Sydney

Gwyn Hanssen Pigott OAM, Ipswich, Queensland

By descent from the above

Private Collection, Melbourne

Mossgreen Auctions, Melbourne, *Australian Indigenous & Oceanic Art*, 22 July 2014, lot 69

Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

LITERATURE

Henry F. Skerritt, ed., *Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection*, Reno and Munich, 2016, pp. 150-151

EXHIBITED

Newcomb Art Museum, Tulane University, New Orleans, *Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection*, 7 September 2016 - 1 January 2017; additional venues: Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida International University, Miami, 28 January - 7 May 2017; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, 23 September 2017 - 21 January 2018; Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 17 February - 13 May 2018; The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., 2 June - 9 September 2018; Museum of Anthropology, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1 November 2018 - 24 February 2019

$ 10,000 – 15,000

Painted in 2009 and 2010, the artist describes this series of barks known as the 'white paintings' as 'meaningless'. A series of them were exhibited at the National Gallery of Australia in *unDisclosed: 2nd National Indigenous Art Triennial* in 2012. In the accompanying catalogue essay to the Triennial, curator Franchesca Cubillo writes:

"[...] during 2009, Nyapanyapa removed the figurative elements from her work so that only the layered coloured segments of crosshatching remained; this is called 'mayilimiriw'. The literal translation of 'mayilimiriw' is 'meaningless'; that is, they have no Dreaming narrative; however, they are not devoid of substance. These works no longer exist as landscapes in a horizontal plane, but rather are transferred onto a vertical plane. They can also be read as landscapes from a topographical perspective and not a lineal plane. This is an innovative departure from bark painting traditions as, in the past, vertical bark paintings tended to refer to body painting. Nyapanyapa's 'white paintings' are mayilimiriw. They are unpretentious intuitive white waves of free-flowing crosshatching. One gets a sense of the melodic rhythm of the ocean's competing currents. The works are like random movements of white foam on the shoreline as the ocean tides advance and recede." (Franchesca Cubillo, *unDisclosed: 2nd National Indigenous Art Triennial*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2012).

See also Will Stubbs, "Art of the Artless", in Henry F. Skerritt, ed., *Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection*, Reno and Munich, 2016, for discussion of the artist, her life and artistic practice.



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LOT 97

NYAPANYAPA YUNUPINGU

Circa 1945 - 2021

Light Painting, 2010-2011

Digital File, silent, ed. 5 and 2 AP, this edition AP;

PROVENANCE

Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Art Centre, Yirrkala, Northern Territory, catalogue number 3589M

Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Paddington, Sydney

Private Collection, acquired from the above

LITERATURE

Luke Scholes, ed., *The Moment Eternal: Nyapanyapa Yunupiŋu*, Darwin, 2020, pp. 59-72, illus.

EXHIBITED

Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, *18th Biennale of Sydney: All our Relations*, 27 June - 16 September 2012

The National Gallery of Victoria, Ian Potter Centre, 2014 - 2015

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, *Western Australian Indigenous Art Awards*, 13 August - 19 December 2011

Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, *The Moment Eternal: Nyapanyapa Yunupiŋu*, 23 May - 25 October 2020

$ 30,000 – 50,000

This painting is sold with accompanying documentation provided by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, reading in part:

"Nyapanyapa Yunupingu's *Light Painting* 2010-11 is a projection composed from a set of 110 drawings in white paint pen on clear acetates, made at Yirrkala Art Centre between 2010 and 2011. These drawings were scanned into a custom made computer program which uses a logarithm to randomly select three acetates at a time, assigns an opacity to each, then overlays against a second set of three. This process continues at an almost imperceptible rate, and only repeats after several hundred million iterations. There is no start and no end. Every time the work is viewed, it is different. The result is a painting with light as its medium."

An edition of this work is held by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, purchased by the NGV Foundation in 2013; another is held by the Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased in 2012.



ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022 Sotheby's

PRIVATE COLLECTION, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

LOT 98

DANIEL WALBIDI

Born 1983

Kirriwirri, 2010

Acrylic on linen;
59 in by 70 ¾ in (150 by 180 cm);

PROVENANCE

Short St Gallery, Broome, Western Australia

Private Collection, Perth, acquired from the above

$ 80,000 – 120,000

The first seismic event to shake Daniel Walbidi's world was in 1999, when the sixteen-year-old walked into Short Street Gallery in Broome. He approached the gallery's manager, Emily Rohr, with an idea. He told her he was an artist. And he said there were old people in his community who needed to paint.

So began the flourishing of creativity that swept through Bidyadanga, a coastal hamlet 200km south of Broom. Bidyadanga, once a Catholic mission known as La Grange, was home to men and women who had been brought west from the Great Sandy Desert. Their work was unlike other desert painters: bound to the cultural connections of the desert but saturated in the vibrant colours of the coast, the sea and the marine life.

Walbidi, their young intellectual leader, worked among them, listening to their stories, learning about the belief systems of the desert. At the same time, he was developing a reputation in his own right, beyond northern Australia, as a contemporary artist to watch, the next wave of Aboriginal creativity. His work carried a fresh energy and clear aesthetic focus. He stood apart from other Aboriginal desert painters in his fusion of traditions, both geographic and artistic, in a single vision.

Then came the second seismic event. In 2007, a group of Yulparija elders decided to end four decades of exile and visit their desert country again. Walbidi joined them, and in doing so he saw the vast, arid landscape that until then had only existed in his dreams—and in his art. This included Kirriwirri, the birthplace of his father's family, and Winpa, a fresh water spring.

"That first trip, it was life changing. For me, personally, and for my art, the way I paint," Walbidi said. "When we went out to Winpa, I was also able to make a flight over, and see the aerial view, how large and vast the salt lakes were, shimmering, and bright."

This formative journey was the subject of a documentary called Desert Heart, narrated by Walbidi. The title was deliberately chosen. They were coastal people, he explained, but also they were desert people with desert hearts.

Walbidi's art continued to evolve. Curators paid attention. "He's a visionary," said Nick Mitzevich, the director of the National Gallery of Australia.

And so we come to Kirriwirri, with its intense concentrations of colour and sweeping aerial view. Walbidi blends the desert with the sea—yellow to orange, turquoise to green—in block patterns that expand like the tide from the waterhole that draws our eye to the centre. It carries a similar colour palette to another of his works, another key marker of ancestral country, the geometrically striking Winpa, now part of the NGA's collection. Both paintings come to life with the qualities that will make his upcoming Gagosian exhibition in New York such a singular moment. Here is a painter who has studied the major movements of the western art world and synthesised them with knowledge closer to home. Here is a painter who looks to the sea and dreams of the desert. And here is a painter, still in his thirties, already a veteran, bridging worlds through his art.

Ashleigh Wilson

Ashleigh Wilson is an author, journalist and arts consultant based in Sydney. He was Arts Editor of The Australian newspaper for a decade, and is the author of Brett Whiteley: Art Life and the Other Thing (2016); On Artists (2019); and A Year With Wendy Whiteley (late 2022.)



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PRIVATE COLLECTION, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

LOT 99

MARINGKA BAKER

Born circa 1952

Amangu, 2010

Acrylic on canvas;
46½in by 78 in (118.5 cm by 198.5 cm);

PROVENANCE

Painted at Kanpi in South Australia for Tjungu Palya Art Centre (cat. no. 10469)

Chapman Gallery, Canberra

Tony Norton and Jann Williams, Tasmania, acquired from the above

Mossgreen Auctions, Melbourne, *Spinifex and Sand: The Tony Norton and Jann Williams Collection of Aboriginal Fine Art*, 4 April 2016, lot 18

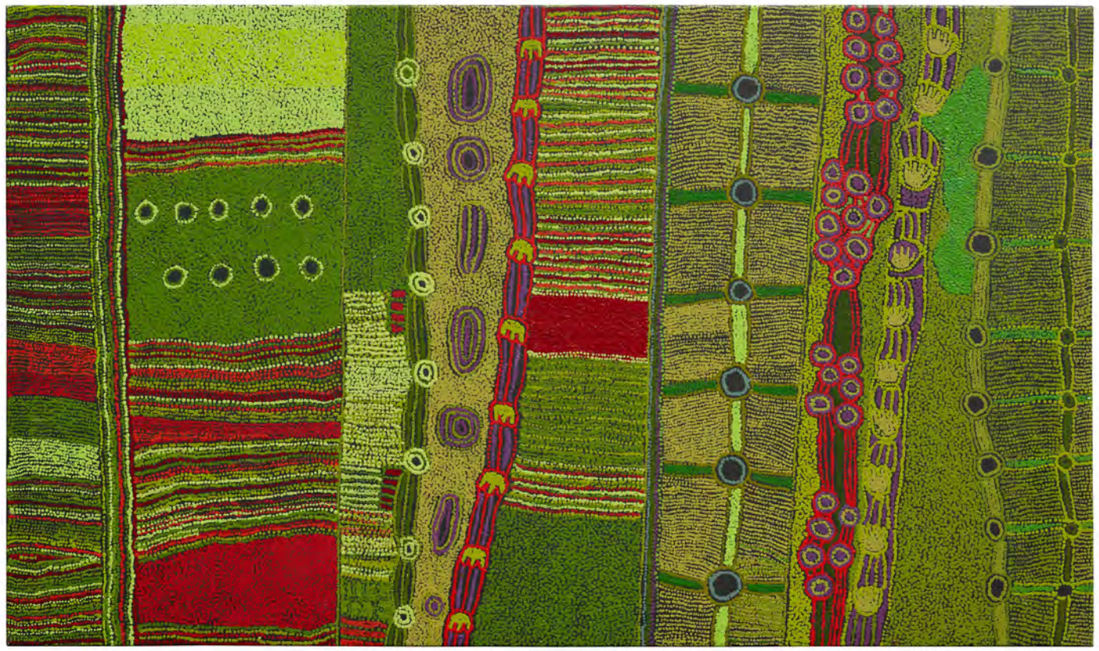
Private Collection, Perth, acquired at the above auction

$ 20,000 – 30,000

See Graeme Marshall's essay on the artist in D. Clarke and S. Jenkins, *Culture Warriors: Australian Indigenous Art Triennial*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2007, in which related paintings of similar scale and palette are illustrated.

This painting is sold with accompanying Tjungu Palya Arts documenation with descriptive notes that read in part, "Papa tjuta njinanyi kapipitingka. (all the dingoes are sitting around the rock hole). Wanampi pitanyi pika (the serpent men came and were looking for a fight). They came from Mutitjulu way. This country is Amangu Papaku Tjukurpa (Dingo Dreaming). Amangu is country to the south of Nyapari and Irrunytju close to Watarru.

There is a lot of story for this country. Tjukurpa Mulapa (this creation story is true). I travelled this country a lot as a child. We would set out from Kata Ala and would travel on foot. No motor car then. After visiting this country we would return to sit down at Kata Ala. There were a lot of families living there then. Before the Wingellina Community was established. In the old days the people were always travelling. Everybody was looking for bushfoods. Sometimes they would get mushrooms, yellow ones. We call them Wintjinara."



ABORIGINAL ART | NEW YORK 25 MAY 2022 Sotheby's

LOT 100

NONGGIRRNGA MARAWILI

Born circa 1939

Lightning and the Rock, 2014

Earth pigments on bark;
676 ¾ in by 20 1/16 in (194 by 51 cm);

PROVENANCE

Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Art Centre, Yirrkala, Northern Territory

Private Collection, acquired from the above

LITERATURE

Henry F. Skerritt, ed., *Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection*, Reno and Munich, 2016, pp. 40-41

EXHIBITED

Newcomb Art Museum, Tulane University, New Orleans, *Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection*, 7 September 2016 - 1 January 2017; additional venues: Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida International University, Miami, 28 January - 7 May 2017; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, 23 September 2017 - 21 January 2018; Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 17 February - 13 May 2018; The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., 2 June - 9 September 2018; Museum of Anthropology, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1 November 2018 - 24 February 2019

$ 10,000 – 15,000

Noŋgirrŋa Marawili is a Madarrpa/Galpu woman from Baniyala in north-east Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. She is a respected elder in her community who holds deep knowledge of Yolŋgu culture, ceremony and painting. For many years she assisted her husband, Djutjadjutja Munuŋgurr (circa 1935-1999) in painting, however from 2011 onwards he gave cultural permission for Marawili to produce works independently, holding her first solo exhibition, *And I am Still Here*, at Alcaston Gallery in Melbourne in 2013.

Working at the Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka art center at Yirrkala in the Northern Territory, Marawili's highly refined bark paintings of bold and resolved design take their inspiration from the elemental substances and transformative forces of the natural world: fire, water, lightning, and rock. "For the Yolŋgu people of eastern Arnhem Land, these ephemeral moments are the points where the ancestral world and the profane world meet, through which the beauty of the environment is given meaning." (Elina Spilia in Henry F. Skerritt, ed., *Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection*, Reno and Munich, 2016, p. 34).

Marawili's work has been shown in group and solo exhibitions held nationally and internationally. 2017 marked a year of extraordinary success for her, with inclusion in important exhibitions, including *Defying Empire: 3rd National Indigenous Art Triennial* at the National Gallery of Australia, *TARNANTHI: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art* at the Art Gallery of South Australia, and *Who's Afraid of Colour* at the National Gallery of Victoria.

A major solo exhibition which brought together works from across her career, *From my Heart and Mind*, spanned 2018-2019 at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, culminating in her winning The Roberts Family Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Prize in association with the Art Gallery of New South Wales' Wynne Prize. In the same year she won the Telstra Bark Painting Award at the 36th Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awards for the second time at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin.

In 2019-2020 a major installation by Marawili was unveiled at *TARNANTHI: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art*, presented by the Art Gallery of South Australia in Adelaide. She also participated in *NIRIN: 22nd Biennale of Sydney* (14 March – 8 June 2020) with an installation of large bark paintings suspended from the ceiling at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia.

Her work is currently included in *Know My Name: Australian Women Artists 1900 to Now*, a landmark exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. An initiative of the gallery, *Know My Name* celebrates the work of all women artists with an aim to enhance understanding of their contribution to Australia's cultural life, joining the global movement to increase the representation of women artists.

For a similar work in the National Gallery of Victoria, see Cara Pinchbeck, ed., *Noŋgirrŋa Marawili: From my Heart and Mind*, Sydney, 2018, pp. 20, 80 & 114.



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LOT 101

REGINA PILAWUK WILSON

Born circa 1948

Syaw (Fishnet), 2015

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
98 7/16 in by 137 ⅞ in (250 by 350 cm);

PROVENANCE

Durrmu Arts Aboriginal Corporation, Peppimenarti Community, Northern Territory (cat. no. 62-14)

Private Collection, acquired from the above

LITERATURE

Henry F. Skerritt, ed., *Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection*, Reno and Munich, 2016, pp. 118-119

EXHIBITED

Newcomb Art Museum, Tulane University, New Orleans, *Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection*, 7 September 2016 - 1 January 2017; additional venues: Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida International University, Miami, 28 January - 7 May 2017; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, 23 September 2017 - 21 January 2018; Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 17 February - 13 May 2018; The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., 2 June - 9 September 2018; Museum of Anthropology, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1 November 2018 - 24 February 2019

$ 40,000 – 60,000

In the monumental *Syaw (Fishnet)* Regina Pilawuk Wilson captures the physical expanse of a traditional woven riverine fishing net and the colours of dappled light playing on the surface of water. In her pictures Wilson translates the techniques of weaving traditional fishnets, carrying bags and sun mats in natural fibres coloured by plant-based dyes, into acrylic paintings of intense luminosity, enhanced by the marks of warp and weft. As is customary, a young Regina Wilson was educated in the techniques of preparing, dyeing and weaving fibre by her mother and grandmother and added painting to her repertoire later in life after attending the *Biennale of Contemporary Art, Festival of Pacific Arts*, in New Caledonia in 2000. While she continues to weave, painting has become Regina Pilawuk Wilson's main medium. She is now recognized as one of Australia's leading painters having exhibited at the *3rd Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art* in 2009.

Wally Caruana

Wally Caruana is an independent curator and consultant specialising in Australian Aboriginal art, and director of Caruana Fine Art. From 1984 to 2001 Caruana was the curator of the Aboriginal art collection at the National Gallery of Australia.



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LOT 102

VERNON AH KEE

Born 1967

yourduty, 2016

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
Signed and dated, Vernon Ah Kee, 2016;
47 ¼ in by 69 ¾ in (120 by 177 cm);

PROVENANCE

Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Private Collection

EXHIBITED

Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, *Vernon Ah Kee: cantchant*, January 26 – May 19, 2019

$ 25,000 – 35,000

Vernon Ah Kee's conceptual text pieces, videos, photographs and drawings form a critique of Australian culture from the perspective of the Aboriginal experience of contemporary life. Ah Kee's works respond to the history of the romantic and exoticized portraiture of "primitives", and effectively reposition the Aboriginal in Australia from an "othered thing", anchored in museum and scientific records to a contemporary people inhabiting real and current spaces and time. Practicing as an artist for almost thirty years, his work has been exhibited internationally representing Australia at the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009) and the 14th Instanbul Biennial (2015).

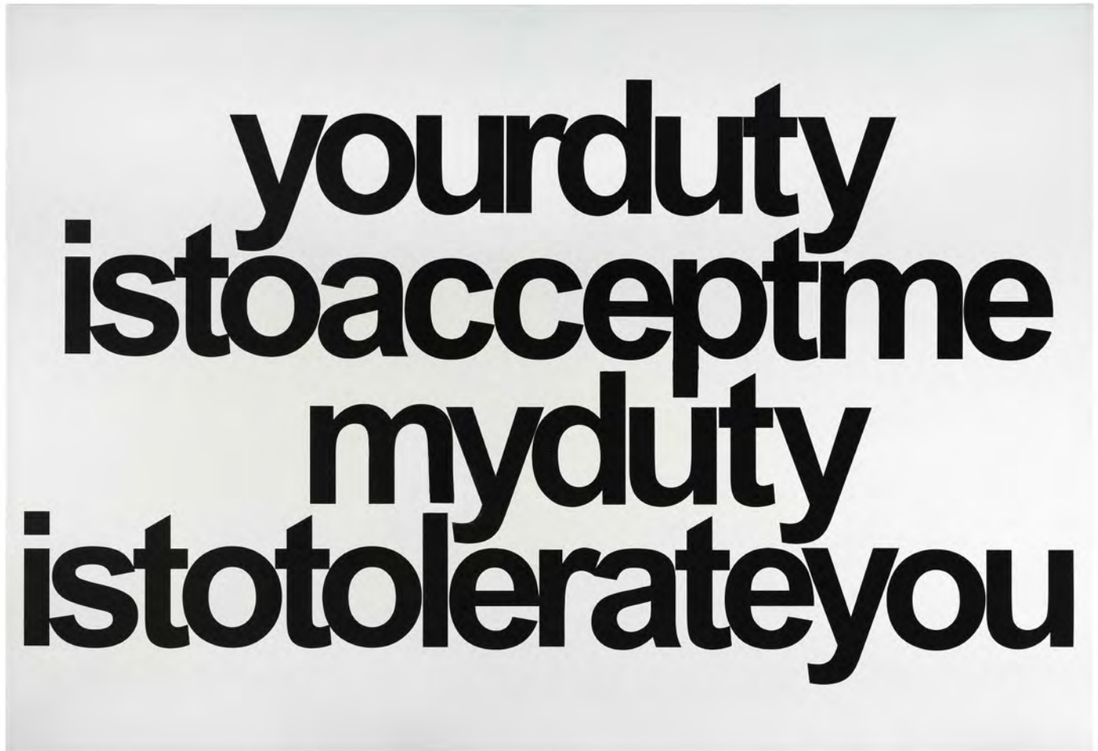
Ah Kee's text pieces are some of the most recognizable in his oeuvre. They combine the languages of conceptual art and minimalism with the urgent issues faced by Indigenous Australians. Influenced by the unapologetic language of activists such as Kevin Gilbert and James Baldwin during his time in art school in the late 1990s, Ah Kee found himself drawn to language as a mode of expression. His lines of text read as excerpts from a larger manifesto and are both instant, yet require pause from the viewer. Ah Kee communicates his thoughts on the predicaments of Indigenous Australians, placing the texts in tight arrangements, forgoing spaces with a sense of "breathless" urgency.

yourduty is bold, yet raw in its pain and strength. It is a central work in his oeuvre, setting out the central moral condition of the indigenous subject in a colonized society. The matte black text offset against the stark white background recalls the forthright and striking designs of Russian constructivist posters that Ah Kee researched during his studies. His text works also intertwine with the logics of minimalism and conceptual art, spurring an immediacy and clarity of form among the wit and systems of language. In Ah Kee's own words: "Text is immediate. If there's something you want to say—write it".

In 2020, *The Island*, a major survey exhibition of Ah Kee's practice, was staged by Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney. His work is currently on display in Espressioni at the Castello di Rivoli, Turin, and *A Year in Art: Australia 1992* at the Tate Modern, London.

1. Anthony Gardener, "Without a Pause, Without a Breath", in *Vernon Ah Kee: Born In This Skin*, Brisbane, 2009, p. 57

2. Vernon Ah Kee, interview by Glenn Barkley, 7 March 2009, *ibid*., p. 20



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PRIVATE COLLECTION, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

LOT 103

PEPAI JANGALA CARROLL

Circa 1950 - 2021

Ininiti, 2017

Acrylic on linen;
61 ½ in by 72 ¾ in (156 by 185 cm);

PROVENANCE

Ernabella Arts, South Australia (cat. no. 450-17)

Sturt Gallery and Studios, Mitagong, New South Wales

Private Collection, Perth, acquired from the above

LITERATURE

Belinda Brigs, Alison Milyika Carroll, Luke Scholes, *Pepai Jangala Carroll – Ngaylu nyanganyi ngura winki: I Can See All Those Places*, Adelaide, 2021, p. 94

EXHIBITED

Sturt Gallery and Studios, Mitagong, New South Wales, *Pepai Carroll: In These Hands Mara Nyangangka*, 7 December 2017 - 11 February 2018 and touring to Craft & Design Center, Canberra; Australian Design Center, Sydney; Jam Factory, Adelaide

$ 40,000 – 60,000

Pepai's early life coincided with a period of dramatic social change for Western Desert Aboriginal people. Born in the winter of 1950 at the Lutheran Mission of Haasts Bluff, Pepai – like so many people of his generation – was forced to live far from the country for which he held customary cultural rights. A number of competing factors, including drought, pastoralism and dwindling Aboriginal populations, prompted the gradual transition of desert people from a seasonal life on the land and into government settlements, missions and communities.

While living at Haasts Bluff, Pepai's father, Henry Paripata Tjampitjinpa, travelled long distances collecting and selling Dingo (Canis lupus dingo) pelts to support his growing family. As a young boy Pepai accompanied his father on one such trip during which they visited Paripata's birthplace at the soakage water site of Ininti. It was here – Pepai would later learn – that the ancestral Kungka kutjarra (Two women) entered the earth, resulting in the creation of a semi-permeant water source that generations of Pintupi people continue to rely upon. It was a journey that left an indelible mark in Pepai's mind, the significance of which would intensify with each passing year.

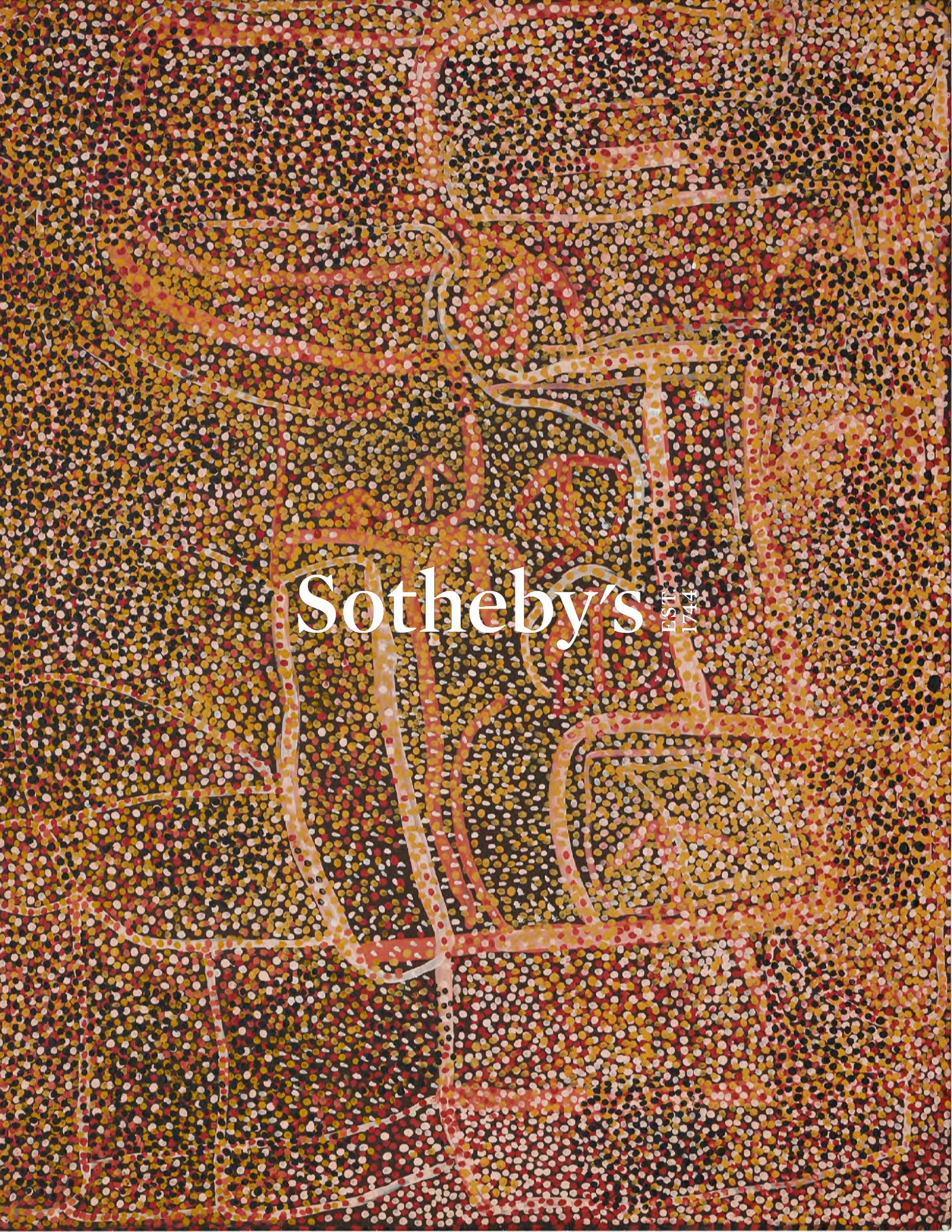
It wasn't until 2017 that Pepai finally had the opportunity to return to Ininti, this time as an elderly man and accomplished artist. Upon arrival at Ininti, Pepai requested the soakage area be cleared and a deep hole dug. After hours spent digging water finally gathered at his feet, causing this gentle man of the desert to smile with quiet joy. After many years, and right before his eyes, his country was once again awoken within. Pepai's triumphant return to country inspired a series of painting and ceramics. Ininti, 2017 is fine example of this important period in the artist's life. His singular style, emboldened by this journey, is characterised by a highly gestural dotting action that brings the surface of the painting to life.

Luke Scholes

Luke Scholes is former curator of Aboriginal art at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. He has curated multiple award-winning exhibitions and written extensively about Aboriginal art.



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